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By JOHN FAWCETT. *DD*

THE SECOND EDITION.

ANIMUM REGE; QUI, NISI PARET,
IMPERAT ———. HOR. EPIST. ii. 62.

BE ANGRY AND SIN NOT. —PAUL.

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P R E F A C E.

*I*N compliance with the earnest solicitations of a few select friends, for whom I have the highest esteem, the ensuing discourse is, with diffidence and humility, submitted to the candour of the public. I am conscious of many defects, in it, and wish they may not be found of such consequence as to prejudice the good cause which I desire above all things to promote. The subject is important, and it is hoped the author's aim in treating upon it, will be deemed laudable. Those who know his circumstances, may perhaps be disposed to make some kind allowances for the inaccuracies they may here meet with, and peruse these pages with christian simplicity, rather than the severity of criticism.

The intelligent reader will observe, that I have availed myself of many hints and observations of the most valuable and approved authors, which I thought pertinent and striking. I have sometimes forbore to mention the names of those authors; not that I might appropriate their labours, or usurp their honours; but that I might not crowd the pages of this diminutive performance by ostentatious quotations. I hope this general acknowledgment

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will be deemed a sufficient apology for the liberty I have taken in this behalf.

It is not to be expected that many things can be advanced on moral subjects entirely new. The finest and most beautiful thoughts concerning the government of our passions, and the regulation of our manners, have been carried away before our times; and little is left for us but to glean after the ancients, and the most approved of the moderns.

I hope it will appear that it has been my endeavour through the whole, to advance nothing on the subject but what is consonant with the sacred oracles, the infallible rule of faith and practice; and that my design is to promote that meekness, benevolence, peace and love which are the brightest ornaments of the christian character.

Brearley-Hall, near Halifax,

O^c. 30, 1788.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

UNGOVERNED anger is a fruitful source of mischief to human life. Many of the scenes of public calamity and private distress which strike us with astonishment and horror, have originated from this direful spring. It is this which hath overspread the earth with blood and slaughter. It is this which hath so often filled the poisoned bowl, loaded the murderous pistol, and pointed the assassinating dagger. It hath, through successive ages, furnished ample materials for the poet's tragic muse, and the orator's pathetic declamation.

The wrath of princes hath embroiled kingdoms in war and blood-shed. It hath subjected nations to continual frights and losses, and made death and terror continually to walk about in their most horrid forms. Then, what desolation reigns! Rest is disturbed, property destroyed, families are broken, friends are suspected, enemies are feared, laws are trampled upon, commerce is ruined, business is neglected, cities are wasted, and filled with heaps of slain.

The wrath of priests hath deluged the church in blood, the blood of those of *whom the world was not worthy*. It hath slain its thousands, and ten thousands. Detestable bigotry, what hast thou done ! Cruel superstition, unhallowed rage, what havock have ye made in the fold of Christ ! Nothing can be more remote from the genius of the gospel of peace, from the nature of the religion of love, or from the precepts and example of Him whose name is the Prince of peace, whose nature is love, whose first and great command is charity, and who has left us an example of meekness and lowliness of heart.

The miseries and mischiefs occasioned by lawless anger in private societies, and domestic connections, are without end. *Where envying and strife are, there is confusion, and every evil work*. The dis-union of churches, the distraction of families, and the disquietude of neighbourhoods, arise, in general, from ungoverned anger, that root of bitterness, that fruitful source of human woes.

Be this then the subject of our present meditation. And may the light of divine revelation guide our researches, and the Spirit of peace and love seal instruction to our hearts !

Anger, according to Mr. *Locke*, is uneasiness or discomposure of the mind, upon the receipt of any injury, with a present purpose of revenge.

Anger is displeasure. Its opposite is complacency. It is that sensation which we feel when a person seeks to prevent us from obtaining the good we wish to enjoy, when he strives to deprive us of the good we possess; or when he endeavours to bring upon us the evil we dread.

Anger is defined by Mr. *Hutcheson*, to be a propensity to occasion evil to another, arising from apprehension of an injury done by him. It is accompanied with sorrow and grief, a desire of repelling the affront, and making the author of it repent his attempt, and repair the damage we sustain by him.

In the sacred writings, anger is often attributed to God. *He is angry with the wicked every day.* Not that he is liable to those irregular emotions which produce, or are produced by this passion in men; but because he is resolved to punish the wicked with the severity of a provoked father or an incensed master.

Anger is often joined with fury, even when attributed to the Almighty. We read of the heat of his anger, and the fierceness of his wrath. And how much is the power of his anger to be dreaded! This sets forth the awful, the accursed nature of that which the long-suffering God so much resents, i. e. Sin. The impenitent, the obstinate sinner, because there is wrath, should
beware

beware, lest he be taken away with a stroke ; and then a great ransom cannot deliver him. He should flee from the wrath to come.

Neither every kind nor every degree of anger is to be condemned. The passion simply, and in its own nature cannot be sinful. Two reasons, I think, may convince us of the truth of this.

1. It seems to have been planted in the original frame of human nature. Every power of the human mind is now perverted by sin. Anger among the rest is become a depraved passion. But it existed before it was depraved. And being the appointment of him who is perfect in purity, must, in itself, be an innocent passion, allowable on just occasions, and to be exercised in a proper and becoming manner. *Be angry and sin not.* To endeavour entirely to banish it from our minds, would be an attempt equally foolish and fruitless.

2. The blessed and holy Jesus himself, that pattern of perfection, who has left us an example that we should walk in his steps, was, when on earth, sometimes angry. Mark iii. 5. *And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts; he saith to the man, Stretch forth thine hand.*—Here is anger without sin : anger in one who knew none, and in whose spirit there was no guile.

guile. Nay, it would be no hard task to prove, that this anger was a virtue. The hardness of their hearts called for this holy resentment. Their blindness was obstinate, their opposition to him was unreasonable to the highest degree. Such a temper, such a conduct could not be looked upon with coolness and indifference.

If we ourselves were perfectly free from sin, and were to converse only with creatures entirely innocent, it does not appear that there would be any occasion for the exercise of anger.

But we live in a world where iniquity abounds, where oppression and injustice are every day practised; and, as such, there are many occasions for a righteous and holy resentment. It is good to be zealously affected, always in a good thing. God who does nothing in vain, has implanted in our natures the irascible passions, that we might rebuke those who trample on his laws, and treat their fellow-creatures with cruelty.

But our natures, alas! are so depraved and disordered through our apostacy from God, that in this as in other things, we pervert that which is right. The anger which is exercised in general, is very sinful and mischievous. It is shewn on improper occasions; it is rash, it is cruel, it is outrageous, or it is revengeful. This kind

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kind of anger is ranked with malice, wrath and bitterness, and we are charged to lay it aside. He that is thus *angry with his brother without cause, is in danger of the judgment.*

To consider violent anger as a mere infirmity incident to human nature, is to form wrong conceptions of it. We should remember, that wrath and strife are as expressly enumerated among the works of the flesh, as uncleanness, murder, or drunkenness. The former may be as offensive to God, as ruinous to us, and as hurtful to our fellow-creatures as the latter.

The suppression of rash anger therefore every one must own to be highly conducive to the comfort of human life, the honour of our holy religion, and the welfare and happiness of all societies, whether natural, civil, or sacred.

By a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price, we are enabled to govern ourselves when any thing occurs that is provoking. As temperance serves to check and moderate our natural appetites in regard to what is pleasing to the flesh; so by meekness we govern and guide our resentment of what is displeasing.

One of the seven sages of Greece left this maxim as a memorial of his knowledge and benevolence, *Be master of thine anger.* He thought,
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it should seem, that he could not lay on posterity a stronger obligation to revere his memory, than by leaving them a salutary caution against furious and unguarded anger.

Rage, peevishness and implacable resentment, can never be vindicated. They are so hateful and diabolical in their nature, and so mischievous in their effects, that they can never admit of any defence. Every wise man condemns them.—*Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, and who is able to stand before envy?*

Violent anger, it has been observed, makes itself visible by many outward signs. It renders the countenance sometimes red and fiery, sometimes pale and wan. It flames or scowls in the eyes; it wrinkles the brow; it enlarges the nostrils, and makes them heave; it fills the tongue with short spiteful words, or noisy threatenings, and the hands with weapons of violence to assault the offender; and sometimes it causes a tremor through all the limbs.

“There is, says an excellent and judicious author, no passion properly so called, and considered in itself as belonging to man, which is absolutely sinful in the abstract nature of it. All the works of God are good. But if passion be let loose on an *improper object*, or in an *improper time or degree*, or for *too long a continuance*, then
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it becomes criminal, and obtains sometimes a distinct name. *Esteem* placed upon *self* as the object, and in an unreasonable degree, becomes *pride*. Anger prolonged into a settled temper, often turns into *malice*, and if it be mingled with vices of the will, it becomes sinful also under that consideration."

The mettle of a young and vigorous steed is not only harmless but serviceable when under due regulation. Much the same may be said of anger in the mind of man. When meekness is the bridle that restrains it, and wisdom the hand that guides it, we are safe. But if it is not under proper government, it breaks through all decorum, grows headstrong and outrageous, and threatens mischief to ourselves or those about us. So the unmanageable horse tramples on those that stand in its way, and, perhaps, throws the rider headlong on the ground. It should be restrained, therefore, with bit and bridle. We are not to submit to anger as to our master, but to govern it as our servant. It should never appear but on proper occasions, nor then but under the strictest guard. We should never suffer it to carry us beyond the bounds of decency. Our resentment should never be either deep or lasting.

My

INTRODUCTION.

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My design in this essay, is—To point out the springs and causes of sinful anger—To consider with what we may lawfully be angry—What restrictions should attend our anger, that we offend not God by it—To consider when it is sinful—To give some cautions against that anger which is violent and criminal ; and to prescribe some rules for the suppression of it.

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ESSAY on ANGER.

CHAP. I.

The Springs and Causes of sinful Anger.

THE irregularity of all our passions originates in the depravity of our nature. In the moral, as well as the natural world, we may plainly perceive the indications of some violent convulsion which has shattered and disordered the workmanship of the great Former of all things. The history of the several nations of mankind, through successive ages and generations, does but present us with a view of the follies and crimes of the descendants of Adam. The whole is a continued tragedy. On this habitable globe, as on a spacious theatre, the same repeated scene hath been exhibited, of depredati-

ons, wrath, strife, debate, tumult, cruelty, oppression and bloodshed; the follies of mankind breaking forth in a thousand guilty forms, and their passions hurrying them on to wretchedness and ruin. Hence the necessity of that wonder of omnipotence, unbounded wisdom and love divine, the redemption of the world by the blood of the Son of God. The greatness of the remedy indicates the depth of the disease.

The nature of man cannot be supposed to come forth from the hands of its glorious and gracious Former, in the state in which it is at present. Far be it from us to admit a thought so dishonourable to him who is glorious in holiness. *He formed man after his own image; but that image is defaced. He made man upright; but we have sought out many inventions.* Nothing impure could come out of his hands; but we are now *all as one unclean thing*. It is true, amidst this wreck of human nature, there still remain some traces which bespeak its author. Man has not lost all his original brightness. Some faint rays break through the horrid gloom in which he is involved, and indicate his ancient splendor.

But all the disorder which reigns within us, and the follies which constantly appear in our outward demeanour, arise from an impure original,

ginal, a nature deeply depraved, as the streams which issue from a corrupted fountain. To this general source we may trace violent anger.

But to be a little more particular.

1. A choleric habit of body seems to dispose some men to be always of a froward humour, and perpetually hard to please. This is their settled temper. Their anger and resentment are ever ready to rise on the slightest occasion. They are angry with the work they are performing, or the instrument in their hands, when they cannot succeed to their wish. They are often out of humour they know not why, and angry with they know not what : Like *Jonah*, who was angry with the wind.

The reverse of this character is the man who is slow to anger. Such a one, says *Solomon*, is *better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city.*

The temperament of the body may have considerable influence in disposing us to irascibility, or to natural mildness, since the passions are not merely the operations of the mind ; they are mental exertions in conjunction with the ferments of the blood, and the commotions of animal nature. The passions are those powers in man which are of a mixed nature, and belong partly to the soul and partly to the body. When

we see an object, for instance, that provokes our resentment, we not only feel some impression of mind, but some kind of commotion in our bodies, which we are not well able to explain. The animal spirits are agitated, the blood is thrown into a fermentation; the effects of which are very apparent to those who observe us, and cannot be concealed. Our brow, our eyes, our nostrils, our cheeks, our voice, all betray us on this occasion.

Now since it is evident that our natural constitutions are very different, it must be allowed that some habits of body are more disposed to irascibility than others. Something like this indeed, is very evident in brutes. Among those of the same species, some are much more disposed to anger than others.

And hence it is, that we see among men an hereditary tendency to some prevailing passion. The hot and choleric propensity predominates in some families, and runs in the blood from father to son. This may be termed a natural cause or spring of excessive anger.

2. *Pride.* A contentious spirit, inspiration assures us, originates in pride. *Only by pride cometh contention. Proud and haughty scorner is he who dealeth in proud wrath.* It is pride that makes men passionate. They cannot bear the
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least slight, or that which hath the appearance of it, because they think themselves of so much importance. We have a remarkable instance of this in *Haman*. He is enraged, filled with indignation, and breathes nothing but revenge. The life of an individual cannot suffice, the blood of a whole nation must be shed to cool his wrath, and lay his vengeance to sleep. What is the cause of this desolating decree? An individual fails to pay him that idolatrous obeisance of which he thought himself so worthy; but this was an act of obeisance to which *Mordecai* in his conscience could not submit. Who does not see, that if it should be asked, *What meaneth the heat of this great anger?* the answer must be, It originates in pride?

Pride keeps men in continual vexation, while the meek and lowly possess their souls in peace and patience. The proud man's character is so odious, that he meets with more affronts than other men; and indeed, he has so good and so high an opinion of himself, that he considers those things as affronts of which a humble man would take no notice. He finds not that submission in his dependents, or respect from his equals, to which he thinks himself intitled. Hence his life is made up of disquietude and distraction. Angry, resentful, malevolent passions torment his soul,
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haunt him like spectres, and rob him of repose. So just is the remark of the wisest of men, *It is better to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.*

It is pride that fills the world with so much animosity. We forget what we are, in the fullness of self-esteem. We claim attentions to which we are by no means entitled, and we are rigorous to offences as if we ourselves had never offended. If pride were subdued, passion would quickly subside.

It is hard for a haughty man ever to forgive one who has caught him in a fault. His resentment will hardly cool till he has regained the advantage he had lost, and provoked the other to do him equal wrong. He hates the man he has once offended.

3. Ignorance is frequently the cause of sinful anger. A weak mind is easily kindled into resentment. A wise man may be angry when there is a sufficient cause for it, but his anger is restrained by prudence and discretion. It is therefore a necessary qualification in a christian minister, that he be *not soon angry.* *A fool's wrath is presently known,* it rises and flames on the slightest provocation; it flashes in his countenance like lightening, and breaks out into such indecent expressions and behaviour, as betray his weakness.

weakness and folly. A prudent man covereth shame, by suppressing his resentment, maintaining possession of himself, and keeping his mouth as *with a bit and bridle*. The man of ungoverned anger saith *to every one that he is a fool. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him*. He is jealous and suspicious, ready to catch at what he calls an affront, sudden in resenting it, and unguarded in expressing his resentment. *Solomon* therefore gives us this necessary caution, *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. The discretion of a man deferreth his anger*. It disposes him to be cautious of giving ear to false accusers and slanderers of his neighbours, who, as *Satan's* instruments, would incense him against others without just grounds. A discreet man defers the admission of anger till he has thoroughly considered all the circumstances of what, at first sight, appears to be a provocation; till he has seen it in a just light, and weighed it in an even balance. Nor will such a one be over nice and critical in his resentment of what may be really deemed an offence against him. He knows that *it is the glory of a wise man to pass over a transgression*. Prov. xix. 11.

The bluster and noise of some men seem to indicate a consciousness of the narrowness of their
own

own understandings. They feel their own ignorance and insufficiency, and appear determined to gain by their clamours, that regard of which they know themselves to be undeserving. How much are the servants and domestics of such men to be pitied! They are all the day long stunned with the bawlings, and terrified with the fury of one whom they cannot but be tempted to despise.

Seneca justly observes that this passion indicates weakness. Little children, aged men, and such as are infected by disease, are most subject to it.

4. Covetousness is likewise the cause of sinful anger. When the covetous man is crossed in his designs, blasted in his hopes, or disappointed in his wishes, he sinks into impatience and fretfulness. *Ahab* coveted his neighbour's vineyard, and on *Naboth's* refusing to comply with his unreasonable desire, he came to his house, *heavy and sore displeased, laid him down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.* 1 Kings, xxi. 1—4. He had all the delights of *Canaan* at his command, all the wealth, the honour and the power of a kingdom and a throne in his possession. But the covetous man, like the grave, never saith, "It is enough." Inordinate desire is never satisfied. *Ahab* is sick with

with vexation, he pines away with resentment, and breathes revenge and slaughter. *In his anger he slew the man, in his self-will he digged through the wall,* and took possession of his innocent neighbour's estate. But the curse of God blasted his enjoyment. He pierced himself through with many sorrows, being caught in those temptations and snares which drown men in destruction and perdition.

If we attach ourselves to present objects as if we were to derive our whole felicity from them, it is no wonder we are thrown into frequent distraction; because we are sure to meet with continual disappointment. We easily grow impatient when we are crossed in the pursuit of those things of which we are over fond. *Jonah's* excessive pleasure in his gourd laid the foundation for his grief and anger when he was deprived of it. *He that is greedy of gain, troubleth his own house* with impatience and fretfulness, when he cannot obtain what his soul lusteth after, or when he loses what he has already gained.

5. Not only watching over our own spirits. The word of command given us by the captain of our salvation is, *Take heed to your spirits.* Mal. ii. 15. They that would be kept from sin, must keep a jealous eye upon their hearts; for there all sin begins. *Take heed to thyself, and keep*

keep thy soul diligently, was the charge which God gave to his ancient people. Deut. iv. 9. The motions of the inward man should be carefully and constantly guarded. *Out of the heart are the issues of life*. Our lives will be regular or irregular, comfortable or otherwise, according as our tempers and passions are guarded or not. This is the reason the wise man gives, why we should keep our hearts *with all diligence*. Prov. iv. 23. It is not enough to guard our eyes, our ears, our tongues, our hands or feet; the heart itself should be carefully guarded and kept with all keeping, as the word there signifies. There are many ways of keeping things; as by care, by strength, by calling in assistance; and all are necessary to be used in keeping the heart from violent and angry passions. The man of moderation is certainly of a more amiable character than he who is rash, unguarded, and inconsiderate.

He who is of a testy humour, who takes no care to govern his own spirit, is boisterous and gentle by turns. He is either all storm, or all sunshine. And as such, his life is divided between guilt and repentance. One moment he is affronting and abusing you, the next he is asking you a thousand pardons.

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In conversation with his associates, his jealousy suspects some insult to be offered where all is perfectly innocent, he is up in arms in an instant, without any opponent but his own suspicions. He answers the matter with hasty resentment before he hears it; and this is folly and a shame to him.

Those who are particularly addicted to this weakness, should watch and pray that they enter not into temptation. If at any time, when an affront is given, they find themselves unable to govern their spirits, it may be best to leave the ground, to withdraw from the company, and retire into their closets. Let them there bewail their pride and ungovernable passion, ask forgiveness of God, and implore the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, to subdue their irregular tempers, and teach them to imitate their divine Redeemer in meekness and lowliness of heart.

6. Not considering the evil of sinful anger. A meek and quiet spirit is of such real value, that God himself beholds it with delight, and puts a high value upon it: it is *in the sight of God of great price.* 1 Pet. iii. 4.

Rash anger, as *Seneca* observes, is the most outrageous, brutal, intractable, and dangerous of all passions. *Homer* represents the wrath of

Achilles as the source of unnumbered woes to the *Greeks*.

We always blame rash anger in others, and though we are prone to think too favourably of our own conduct, we are frequently ashamed of this passion in ourselves. It is therefore very common to hear men exculpate themselves, and solemnly declare, they are not angry, when they give undeniable proofs that they are.

Scarcely any thing lessens us more in the eyes of those about us, than violent anger. It exposes us to the derision of those who are not in our power, and to the hatred of our inferiors and dependents. If the angry man gains any influence by his bluster and noise, he pays dear for his power. He forfeits his own tranquillity, he loses the friendship of his equals, and incurs the hatred of his dependents. *Solomon's* counsel is in this, as in other things, highly worthy of attention. *Make no friendship with an angry man; he is a churl, a Nabal, a man cannot speak to him with safety; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.*

The torment attending this passion is strongly expressed in scripture. *A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment.* He not only affronts his neighbour, and disquiets his family, but he tear-
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eth himself, his own heart, his own bowels, in his anger. He taketh his flesh in his teeth, and putteth his life in his hand.

Now did we consider these and such like bitter fruits of anger, we should take more care to watch and pray against it.

An all-wise Providence has so ordered the succession of causes and effects, that the wrath which was meant to be poured forth upon others, frequently recoils, by its effects, on the wrathful persons themselves. *In the net which they had laid for others is their own foot taken; they fall into the pit which they had digged.* This is evidently seen in the case of *Haman*. He is hanged on the gallows his furious heart had prepared for the destruction of *Mordecai*.

7. Not duly considering the object which provokes us.

The circumstances of that which we apprehend to be a provocation should always be attentively viewed. Nothing can be a stronger proof of a man's weakness, than his suffering his fiery passions to rise and flame before he knows whether there is any occasion. We should never be angry at a child, a servant, or a friend, till we see from a clear and impartial survey of circumstances, that we have just reason to be so. How much sinful anger would be prevented by

a little deliberation ! Were we but, when we suppose an affront is given us, *swift to hear*, and *slow to speak*, we should be *slow to wrath*. Jam. i. 19.

We are often deceived with what at first sight appears to be a provocation. Anger should not be cherished till we are well assured that there is an offence committed. We should take time to deliberate on the merits of the cause ; and forbear to be angry till we are well satisfied that it becomes us to resent what is done or said. Otherwise we shall disquiet ourselves in vain, sink our own character, and expose our own folly, whilst we are pretending to correct what we often erroneously suppose to be amiss in others.

Human life, unhappy as it is, cannot supply great evils so often as the angry man thinks proper to fall into his fits of madness and fury. And therefore his rage frequently breaks out on trifling occasions. A little reflection afterwards must shew him his own meanness.

In vain does he plead, that his passion is soon over, that he cannot help it, that he harbours no malice, and the like. These, says an ingenious writer, are arguments for pardoning a bull or a mastiff ; but shall never reconcile me to an intellectual savage. He is ready, perhaps, to do the very next moment, something that he can never

never repair : And hath nothing to plead in his own defence, but that he is apt to do mischief as fast as he can. Such a man, adds he, may be feared, he may be pitied ; but he can never be loved.

These are some of the causes of sinful anger. A cholerick habit of body—Pride—Ignorance—Covetousness—Unwatchfulness—Not considering the evil of sinful anger—Not considering the object which provokes us.

C H A P. II.

With what we may lawfully be angry.

AND I apprehend it is lawful for us to be angry. 1. With our own sin. To be displeased with ourselves seems necessary to true penitence. The repenting sinner is grieved at his own folly. He is angry with himself that he has acted so unbecomingly, so unworthily, and in a manner so dishonourable to God. Thus *Job* declared he *abhorred himself*. He saw his own vileness, and was filled with indignation against his sin. The sons of *Israel* were grieved and angry with themselves when they were made sensible of the evil they had done in their cruel

and unnatural treatment of their brother. Thus we may be angry and not sin. Let us turn our indignation against that evil thing which stirs up the displeasure of the Almighty, and is the source of all our woe.

We have done ourselves more injury by sin than all other persons could ever do us. Let a man, says *Seneca*, consider his own vices, reflect upon his own follies, and he will see that he has the greatest reason to be angry with himself.

2. We may lawfully be angry with the vices and follies of others. That quietness of spirit which is in the sight of God of great price, is not a passive tameness of mind, where all steadiness of principle is renounced, and where a sinful conformity to the world vitiates the whole character. It is no part of christianity to yield an unlimited compliance with the manners of mankind. As we are surrounded with those who work iniquity, and walk in the ways of death, the worst maxim, perhaps, which we can adopt, is that of always assenting to what we hear or see, and complying with what is proposed or done by others. The purity and dignity of the christian character can never be maintained, without resolution to oppose what evidently appears to be wrong. *Nehemiah's* anger was just and reasonable when the *Jews* uttered their impatient

patient complaints. *I was very angry when I heard their cry.* Nehem. v. 6, 7. He was not guilty of that rashness which betrays men into the mischiefs of ungoverned passion. He *consulted within himself* before he expressed his displeasure. He took time for sober thought, and then he rebuked the nobles. A good man, saith *Theophrastus*, must be displeased with the vices of the wicked.

The meekness recommended in the word of God, is not a sinful easiness and indifference with respect to the abominations which are practised by those about us. It is not to act the part of *Ephraim*, who *willingly walked after the commandment* of idolators. Hos. vii. 11.

Where is our zeal for God, if we are entirely calm and unmoved when we see his laws trampled on, and hear his name dishonoured? In the case of the obstinacy and perverseness of the *Jews*, in shutting their eyes against the clearest evidence, and hardening their hearts against the tenderest love, to have felt no grief, no resentment, would certainly have been a defect.

When a friend is ill-treated, or a brother unjustly reproached, it would be criminal to sit by in silence, and without concern. For as *the North wind driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*

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When an innocent person is injured, the defenceless widow oppressed, or the helpless orphan trampled upon, generosity and compassion call for some degree of resentment. But in this generous resentment, the mind, if awed by the majesty of God, and duly cautious, may still retain her own tranquillity and peace.

In some circumstances it is necessary to resent the injuries done, or the insults offered to ourselves. I am sensible the greatest caution is necessary here. If the offence be slight, and the damage we sustain trifling, it is better to pass it by in silence. The christian is forbidden both by the precept and example of his Lord and Master, to render *railing* for *railing*, or *evil* for *evil*. But when the injury is great, or the offence often repeated, our silence would have the appearance of stupidity, and despicable meanness, in the eyes of those who are not to be influenced by any thing, but their fears of falling under the scourge of justice, or the lash of the law.

The abominations of hardened transgressors committed against God, should excite our holy resentment. *I beheld transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy law.* Moses's anger was kindled when he saw the people given to idolatry. Thus *Lot's righteous soul was vexed* with

with the filthy conversation of the wicked. And he who is glorious in holiness, by a strong figure, is said to have been *grieved at his heart, when he saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth.*

3. With the disorders found in the house of God. In the *Corinthian* church there was a notorious offender, an incestuous person. Christianity being but in its infancy among them, the members of that church did not see the evil of this conduct till the apostle laid it open before them. They immediately, on receiving proper information, took the necessary measures to express their detestation of the offender's conduct. They *put away from among them that wicked person.* And the apostle commends their holy indignation and zeal. 2 Cor. vii. 11.

The ancient *Jews* were censured that they were *not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph*; the sins, the disorders, and consequent calamities of the people professing to be the chosen of God. Amos vi. 6.

Moses was the meekest man of all the earth, yet when God's honour was concerned, none more warm and resolute than he. Hence his resentment of the golden calf, when in holy indignation at that abominable instance of apostasy, in a people so remarkably favoured and distinguished

distinguished by the Almighty, he deliberately broke the tables at the foot of the mount. And when *Korab* and his company presumptuously offended, *Moses*, in pious displeasure, said unto God, *Respect not thou their offering.*

When the house of Prayer was profaned, and made a *house of merchandise, a den of thieves*, the precious Redeemer of mankind, who is *meek and lowly in heart*, corrected the abuse with holy resentment. *He made a scourge of small cords, and drove them out of the temple.*

The apostle *Paul* was a pattern of meekness; he bore the greatest injuries and indignities with astonishing patience, both among heathens, *Jews*, and false brethren; yet in the government of the church, whenever there was occasion, he zealously used the rod of discipline.

4. With the disorders of our own families. To preserve due authority in our families, so as to prevent or suppress disorder, negligence and vice, without forfeiting our own peace of mind, is, perhaps, in our present state of imperfection, as difficult a branch of duty as any assigned us by Providence. To *train up* our children *in the way in which they should go*, to have them *in subjection with all gravity*, to *teach* our households *the way of the Lord, and command them to keep it*, is enjoined upon us, as masters and mistresses of families,

families, by the Sovereign of the universe. To put away iniquity from our tabernacles, to stir up the slothful and negligent, to rouse the inattentive, and to restrain and correct the vicious and unruly, is absolutely necessary. This cannot be done without manly resolution, constant circumspection, sobriety and gravity. Without a certain degree of courage in insisting on what is right, and in resenting and opposing what is wrong, a family would soon be ruined with licentiousness and disorder. The censure passed on *Eli* was very heavy. His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. In a family where no just authority is maintained by those whom God has placed at the head of it, every one will walk in the way of his own heart; and confusion, mischief and ruin will inevitably follow. The great secret of family government lies in maintaining authority without moroseness, discipline without tyranny, and resentment of disorder without rash anger: in preserving decorum and regularity without wounding our own peace of mind.

The wise and virtuous parent or master is armed with sedate resolution, and a proper firmness of soul. He knows, that if his children and servants once conclude him to be incapable of resentment, they will deny him that regard which
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is his due, and indulge themselves in such liberties as good order forbids.

The words of the royal psalmist are so apt to our purpose, that to omit the recital of them could hardly be excused. *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way; O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.* Psalm ci.

We conclude, then, that it is lawful for us to be angry with our own sin—with the vices and follies of others—with the disorders found in the house of God—and with the irregularities of our own families.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

What restrictions should attend our anger that we offend not God by it.

THOUGH we are not absolutely forbidden to be angry, yet happy is he who has the least occasion for it. When the affairs of life seem to require a just resentment, we should consider it as a dangerous moment, and watch against such an excess of it as would be displeasing to God, hurtful to ourselves, and injurious to our fellow-creatures. The word of God spends its curses on those whose wrathful passions lead them on to cruel practices.

That our anger may not be offensive to God,
1. It should not be partial. We should hate every false way. To resent some branches of vice, and connive at others equally pernicious, would be to incur the censure passed on the ancient *Israel*, who were *partial in the law*. To frown upon one offender, and spare another altogether as deep in guilt, would be to have *respect of persons*; and to be a *respector of persons*, we are assured, *is not good*. Pro. xxviii. Such a conduct would leave ground of suspicion with

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regard to our sincerity. It might easily be inferred that our zeal was selfish, that our views were sinister ; and that our resentment did not arise from a just sense of the evil of sin in its own nature. *Let nothing be done through partiality.*

2. It should be attended with pity and sympathy. It has been observed, that even when a public ruler puts the vengeance of the law in execution, and takes away the life of a malefactor, for the good of the rest of the world, it should be done without the passion of private anger. He should rather exercise his own pity to the offender, even when he condemns him to die, and makes him a sacrifice to the public vengeance.

If private persons, then, so far give way to resentful passions, as to divest themselves of pity for, and sympathy with an offender, they *know not what manner of spirit they are of.*

The apostle *Paul* highly resented the conduct of some who were *enemies to the cross of Christ, whose God was their belly, who minded earthly things, and who gloried in their shame.* But at the same time, his resentment was tempered with such a degree of pity and compassion, that the very mentioning of their names drew tears from his eyes. Phil. iii. 18.

Our reproofs and admonitions though plain and faithful, yet should be tender and affectionate.

ate. The nature of the case may sometimes make it necessary to reprove with warmth, yet we should never do it with unfeeling resentment. *Restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* It is needful to be cautious, lest sinful anger shelter itself under the cover of zeal against iniquity. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* A tongue set on fire of hell is not likely to promote the cause of heaven. To a man overtaken with a fault, we should shew that sympathy, kindness and tenderness of heart, which we could wish might be shewn to us in a similar case.

When we are clearly and fully convinced that there is just cause for our resentment, we should, as much as possible, let it appear, that our anger is directed against the sin of the offender, rather than against his person.

3. It should be attended with proper arguments and endeavours to convince and reform. When a man grows so violent against his fellow-creature as to seek and contrive to bring evil upon him, without any design or endeavour to reclaim him from his misconduct, it is properly termed revenge. This is always criminal. The laws of christianity entirely forbid such a disposition. *Recompence to no man evil for evil. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for*

it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Before we give way to our angry passions, we should take time to consider, as has been observed, whether there be any real offence committed, or any injury done; and whether it was accidental, or done with deliberate design. Things appear to a ruffled and heated mind, very different to what in reality they are. When *Julius Cæsar* was affronted, he repeated the alphabet before he would open his lips to speak on the occasion. A little deliberation may set things before us in a juster light.

If indeed we find on reflection, just cause for resentment, let that resentment be tempered with the kindness of friendly admonition. Let the offender see that we have his good at heart, and that all we wish to obtain is his conviction and reformation.

We should not eagerly contend about matters of little moment, nor be unguarded and intemperate in our zeal.

The heathen moralist observes, that we should endeavour to reclaim an offender, not by the violence of anger, but by forcible yet friendly admonitions. For surely the physician will not be angry with his patient whom he means to recover.

ver. *Socrates* finding his resentment too keen against his servant for an offence he had been guilty of, first corrected himself for that heat of temper which his philosophy taught him to condemn, and deferred the attempt to reclaim the delinquent, to a cooler hour. This precaution was truly commendable, and worthy to be imitated by those who call themselves christians.

4. It should be attended with no rash or unwarrantable words or actions.

When anger rises to a high degree, it swells into wrath, fury, and rage. In that state it is termed *a short madness*. The furious man rages like a wild bull in a net. Reason quits the helm. And some, by an excessive indulgence of it, pour out the most horrid language, fling about every thing that comes in their way, and act, in other respects, for the time, the part of a madman.— Nay, it is recorded of some, that they have cherished this phrenzy so far, as that they have actually grown distracted.

Furious anger, say some philosophers, is the boiling of the blood about the heart, the fumes whereof rise so fast into the brain, that reason is, for a time, dislodged.

If we have just cause to be angry, which is far from being so often the case as we are ready to suppose, discretion should teach us to guard our

tongues and our hands, till there be no danger of running into indecencies. We should give our anger time to cool. *Plato* said once to his servant who had been greatly awanting in his duty, "I would beat thee, but that I am angry."

The passionate man is provoked on every trivial occasion, and sometimes vents his rage in fierce vociferations, furious threats and cutting reproaches. It is true, his rage often fumes away in outcries of injuries done him, and protestations of vengeance. But if a child, a lackey, or an apprentice be the object of his resentment, he will not be sparing of his blows, nor merciful in the use of his cane.

While we are in this world of sin and disorder, we must meet with provocations. But the frailty of the weak, the omissions of the negligent, the follies of the imprudent, and the levity of the fickle, should not so far ruffle our spirits, as to cause us to use rash words, or to break forth into sudden acts of violence.

What meaneth the heat of this great anger? If fire is not kept in its proper place and degree, it may do great mischief to ourselves and those about us. Anger is fire, and may be serviceable under due regulation. But it requires strong restraints. *Behold, how great a matter a little degree of immoderate anger kindleth!* When
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this passion is unguarded, it is the great disturber of human life ; the enemy of private tranquillity, and of public happiness.

The wise man tells us, that anger is *outrageous* ; when it rises to a high degree, it is like a *breaking out of waters*. It breaks through the bounds of reason, of conscience, of the laws of God and man, of friendship, and even of natural affection ; as in the case of *Cain*, who slew his brother. *Cease from anger, therefore, and forsake wrath ; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*

What a frightful and odious spectacle is the man who delivers himself up to the tyranny of his violent and wrathful passions ! What ridiculous airs he gives himself ! What a storm appears in his disfigured countenance ! What fury, what flames and fierceness in his eyes ! He breathes out direful threatnings. He abuses the wife of his bosom. He flies upon the children of his own body, with the rage of a lion or tyger. He spares not his dearest and most valuable friends. Tumult and disorder appear in his whole nature. Distraction tortures his soul. His reason is beclouded. Neither truth nor virtue, law nor justice are any longer regarded by him. The man is transformed into a brute, or rather into a fiend and fury. Detestable sight ! Who can behold him without horror ? Fly from him ; he
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is a disgrace to human nature. He is now only a fit companion for Devils, and ought to be shunned and dreaded by human beings. Leave him to be scourged by the rage of his own diabolical passions. He is not fit for the society of reasonable creatures. He is so far from having any claim to the character of a christian, and a child of God, that he is unworthy the name of a man.

O how necessary is it to suppress the first motions of immoderate anger! To quench the spark before it becomes a flame, and breaks through all bounds! Give the latent fire no vent, that it may be smothered and stifled ere it break out to do mischief. Command your tongues to silence, and your hands to stillness, till your spirits are cooled, till calm and sober reason shall preside at the helm, and direct your operations. Have patience a little while, and the illusion which passion always raises, will vanish. You now behold every thing through a false medium.

It is recorded to the honour of Edward the Third, commonly called the Confessor, that one day being laid down upon the bed, one of his domestics, who did not know he was in the room, stole some money out of a chest he found open, which the king let him carry off, without saying a word. Presently after, the boy returned to make

make a second attempt; the king called out to him without any violence of passion, "Sirrah, you had best be satisfied with what you have got; for if my chamberlain comes and catches you, he will not only take away what you have stolen, but also whip you severely." The chamberlain coming in and missing the money, fell into a great rage. But the king calmly said to him, "Be content; the chest should not have been left open, the temptation was too strong for the poor youth; he wanted money more than we do; and there is still enough left for us."

5. It should not be lasting.

When anger continues so long as to be fixed and rooted in the heart, when we refuse an accommodation, and are determined not to be reconciled, it is rancour, it is hatred, it is fixed malice. This kind of anger is slow, secret and revengeful. Like that of *Esau to Jacob*. *The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother.* Anger may enter into the bosom of a wise man, but *in the heart of fools it rests*, it resides, it remains. The fire continues to burn. Such a man gives place to the *Devil*, to irritate and inflame him, and keep up turbulent and revengeful passions in his mind. He gratifies that malicious spirit by yielding to his destructive designs. He meditates revenge, and is pushed on to

to execute some dreadful purpose of sin and mischief. What need have we therefore to beware of lasting anger, and to stand on our guard whenever we find our spirits heated !

Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, to unfit you for your evening devotions, or to disturb your sleep in the night. Much less should it remain with you the following day.

Pythagoras, a heathen philosopher, recommended to his disciples, that if any quarrel should arise, or any degree of anger be cherished, they should, before the sun went down, shake hands and become friends again.

Dr. *Watts*, in his excellent discourse on the passions, has given the following description of that slow and inveterate anger which is most of all to be dreaded. " Sometimes it spreads paleness over the countenance ; it is silent and sullen, and the angry person goes on from day to day with a gloomy aspect, and a sour and uneasy carriage, averse to speak to the offender, unless it be now and then a word or two of a dark and despiteful meaning. The vicious passion dwells upon the soul, and frets and preys upon the spirits. It inclines the tongue to teize the offender with a repetition of his crime in a sly manner, upon certain seasons and occurrences, and that for weeks and months after the offence, and sometimes

sometimes for years. This sort of wrath sometimes grows up into settled malice, and is ever contriving revenge and mischief. May divine grace form my heart in a better mould, and deliver me from this vile temper and conduct !”

As we should seldom suffer our anger to be awakened, so the continuance of it should always be very short. The sullen and long-continued resentment above described, is as much contrary to the grace of meekness as a sudden fit of rage and fury. And as it is a settled and deliberate passion, the guilt of it is more heinous, and marked with deeper aggravations in the sight of God.

That we offend not God by our anger, it should not be partial—it should be attended with pity and sympathy—it should be accompanied with proper arguments and endeavours to convince and reform—it should express itself in no rash or unwarrantable words or actions—it should not be lasting.

C H A P. IV.

When our anger is sinful.

ANGER is not absolutely forbidden to a wise and good man. Yet the greatest care is constantly and absolutely necessary, that we give not a wild and unwarrantable liberty to our anger. We should hold the reins of government with a strong and steady hand, lest our wrath should break out into forbidden mischief. In no part of our conduct are we more prone to offend. The divine rule is short, but very comprehensive. *Be angry, and sin not.* Our present business is, to consider when we transgress this royal law.

ON I. When we are angry with the providence of God, our anger is sinful and unwarrantable.

The events of providence are sometimes grievous and afflictive; they cross our inclinations, and seem to oppose our secular interests. Yet it becomes us not to be angry, fullen and impatient; to strive with our Maker, and to rage like a wild bull in a net; or to struggle and fret like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.

Humility

Humility and meekness would teach us to kiss the rod, to *bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him.* When Aaron beheld that awfully severe dispensation, which cut off his two sons under the manifest displeasure of God, he *held his peace*; he uttered not a murmuring word, Lev. x. 3. On the other hand, *the man after God's own heart*, was *displeased* on an occasion somewhat similar, because the Lord had *made a breach upon Uzza.* 2 Sam. vi. 8. Much happier was he when on a more trying occasion he uttered these words, *Behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good in his sight.* 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. Amiable temper! Submission and meekness here reign, and triumph over every evil disposition.

When *Caius Caesar's* banquet was interrupted by lightning, and his diversions spoiled by thunder, he was angry with the heavens, and reproached the Deity. Let us not resemble that impious Monarch.

We have not, I think, a more striking instance of the power of anger against the conduct of divine providence, than what appears in the character of *Jonah.* We wonder at the patience of *Job*; the impatience of *Jonah* is not less surprising. That angry prophet was displeased with the forbearance and long-suffering of the Al-

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mighty. He was sent to preach to the *Ninevites*, and to declare to them, that within forty days their city should be destroyed. This declaration implied the idea of their continuing impenitent. *Jonah's* reluctance to deliver the message prevailed so far that he fled from the presence of the Lord. A storm is raised to chastise his disobedience. *Jonah* is cast into the sea, and swallowed by a great fish which God had prepared for that purpose. Miraculously preserved in the belly of the fish, he humbled himself, and offered up strong cries and tears to him that is able to save. God had respect to his humiliations; and commanded the fish to vomit him up on dry ground. He went, at length, to deliver the awful message. The *Ninevites* repented, and God spared them; for great are his mercies. *Jonah*, instead of rejoicing at the success of his ministry, was displeased, and full of that restless impatience which always accompanies unreconciledness to the dispensations of providence.--- While he sat in anxious expectation, waiting to see the issue of his prediction, the Lord provided a *gourd*, and made it come up over *Jonah*, to protect him from the heat of the sun.

But all earthly enjoyments are transient and of short duration. *Jonah* was exceeding glad of the *gourd*. When we set our hearts on any earthly enjoyment,

enjoyment, we have reason to expect its speedy removal. The days of mourning for its departure are at hand. God prepared a worm, and it smote the gourd, that it withered. No gourd can flourish, no worm can smite but at his word. The prophet's joy was short indeed. While he rejoiced in the shadow of the gourd, he knew not what was doing at the root of it. Created comforts are withering things. They perish while we admire them. They come forth like flowers and are cut down. That proves least safe which is most dear.

But whether God gives or takes away; whether he sends a gourd or a worm to destroy that which he has sent, still he is carrying on the same design of good to us. His intention is to humble and instruct us, and confirm our hearts in his service. *Jonah* was to learn, by the loss of his gourd, compassion and tenderness. If we are morose, unkind and resentful towards our neighbours, the infinitely wise Disposer of events will find a way to teach us more of that temper and spirit in which he delights.

And yet, who would have thought it! we find the prophet lost in impatience, and hurried away with angry passions for the loss of his gourd. Astonishing! This potsherd of the earth strove with his Maker, and yet was not broken to

pieces ! Seasons of trial are allotted us to shew us what is in our hearts. If the private history of any of us were written by an inspired pen, and every secret thing laid open, how should we blush and tremble at the thought of its being made public to the world !

Jonah wished in himself to die, and said, *It is better for me to die than to live.* The God of patience asked him, *Dost thou well to be angry ?* And he said, *I do well to be angry even unto death !* Strange ! to be angry at God, and angry too for a gourd ; and still to justify his passion in the face of his Maker ! How unaccountably anger blinds the mind, that a man under the influence of it should make light of sin, and bid defiance to death ! Nay should even in the presence of the divine Majesty, justify his rage, and wish to die under the influence of so bad, so shocking a disposition !

It is the unhappy conduct of some, that when the Almighty brings them under any sore affliction, they are fretful and angry with their relatives and friends around them. Patience would teach them to be calm and easy toward their fellow-creatures while they endure divine chastisement. But instead of this, they scatter abroad their discontents in their own families, and many times make them fall heaviest on those who do all
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in their power to comfort and relieve them. Should these discontents be searched to the bottom, perhaps it would be found, that the spring of them is anger and impatience at the chastening hand of God. They are not so daring as to vent their uneasiness at Heaven in a direct manner, the thought of this would shock and terrify them; the stream of their resentment is therefore diverted from the Most High, and directed towards their fellow-creatures. This anger, as it is distressing to the friends and attendants of the afflicted, so it must be displeasing to him who searches the heart, and knows the true spring and cause of it.

2. When we are angry with the laws of God. His laws are *holy, just and good*, and every disciple of Jesus, *delights in them after the inward man*. They are esteemed by him *above gold and silver*, and preferred in sweetness *to honey or the honey-comb*. Yea, says the psalmist, *by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them, there is great reward*. But rebellious minds dislike these restraints. Instead of quarrelling with themselves, they are displeased with the laws of their Maker. *They say unto God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him, and what profit shall we have when we pray to him?*

If anger be, as *Aristotle* describes it, a desire to displease those who are displeasing to us, how hateful is this passion when it hath the laws of God for its object! When its language is, *Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us!*

3. When we are angry with the doctrines of the gospel. We see this kind of anger in the *Jews*, when they heard the preaching of Jesus. He *spake as never man spake*. Words of peace, pardon and salvation flowed from his lips. Yet some of his hearers exclaimed, *These are hard sayings; who can hear them?* Sometimes they were filled with indignation, and sought to lay hands on him, and destroy him. Luke iv. 28. In after days, they were grieved that the disciples taught in the name of Jesus, and some of them *contradicted and blasphemed*. The wrathful man, says *Seneca*, is angry with truth itself, when it is opposite to his inclination, or his humour.

4. When we are angry at the good we see in others. Thus *Jonah* was angry with the *Ninevites*, for that which was pleasing to God, their repentance and humiliation. The psalmist speaks of some who *requited him evil for good, because*, says he, *I follow the thing that good is*. *Joseph* was hated for his dreams, and for his words, and *Daniel* for his continuance in prayer and supplication.

cation to his God. *Cain, the wicked one, slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.* Perhaps there is no species of anger so diabolical as this, to be angry with others because of their excellencies.

5. When we are angry with those who differ from us in religious sentiments. The church of God, since the days of its infancy, hath been always, more or less exposed to the wrath of the world. This wrath has frequently broke forth in all the rage of persecution. The godly have been pursued with fire and faggot, racks and tortures. They have *had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They have been stoned, they have been sawn asunder, they have been tempted, and slain with the sword; the very persons of whom the world was not worthy, have wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, they have been destitute, afflicted, tormented; they have wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, through the fury of the oppressor.* But the anger of persecutors, through the overruling power of the church's Head and Governor, has ever been made to turn against itself, to the destruction of its own purpose. The rage and policy of men have in vain united their efforts to extinguish the light of divine truth. The
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constancy and fortitude of those who have suffered in defence of it, have always had a much greater effect in promoting the good cause, than all the rage and cruelty of persecutors in diminishing it.

The heat of persecution on a religious account, is, in these our happy days, very much abated. If the fire be not quenched, at least it is smothered. The natural rights of mankind, of searching the scriptures for their own direction in matters of religion, of thinking and judging for themselves, and acting according to the light they have, in what relates to conscience, the worship of their Maker, and the salvation of their souls, were never better understood than they are at present. Even in popish countries, some are beginning to emerge from the abyss of darkness, to assert their native rights, and, by little and little, to shake off the fetters of religious tyranny. May their exertions be animated with increasing vigour, and their efforts crowned with success !

Why should I be displeased with any man for his differing from me in his religious opinions? He has the same reason to be angry with me for the liberty I have thought proper to assume.

The right of private judgment is the very ground of the reformation. Without maintain-
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ing that right in the fullest sense, we condemn all that was done in that glorious revolution, as nothing more than a faction in the state, and a schism in the church.

This right was asserted by our Lord Jesus Christ in the whole of his ministry. He charged his disciples to *call no man master on earth*, and exhorted the people to *search the scriptures*, and so to judge for themselves. Such an exhortation would have been full of impertinence, if the right of private judgment could be supposed to have been denied.

The apostle *Paul*, and his fellow-apostles, maintained this right. *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.* Their hearers assumed this privilege, and *searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.*

Let us not therefore thunder out anathemas against those who may differ from us in some points of doctrine, or branches of worship; neither let us pass angry censures upon them. Let us remember, that meekness and love are essential to christianity. Without these, *though we speak with the tongues of men and angels, though we have all knowledge, and understand all mysteries, we are nothing.* Love is the fulfilling of the law; love is also the spirit and tendency of the

the gospel. Its Author is the Prince of peace, and its sum and substance, *peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh.* What pity is it that christianity should ever have been so explained as to promote all the violent and resentful passions that human nature, in its deepest depravity, is capable of, and to patronize the bloodiest cruelties that the world ever beheld! Surely there can be nothing more diametrically opposite than religion and revenge, piety and persecution, prayer and plunder, the service of God, and the slaughter of those who bear his image.

Heat and violence, anger and resentment in religious disputes naturally lead on to persecution. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off wrathful contention before it be meddled with. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.*

One of the disciples of Jesus said to his Master, *We saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followed not with us.* Jesus said, *Forbid him not.* Afterwards, when the Samaritans did not receive him, *John and James, being*

being too violent in their resentment, and having but a scanty acquaintance with the genius of the gospel, spoke of *commanding fire to come down from heaven to consume them*; Jesus turned, and rebuked them, and said, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* Luke ix. 49—55.

We pretend respect and zeal for the religion of Jesus, and shall we at the same time suffer ourselves to be carried away with that harshness and severity which are so opposite to its very nature and tendency? Shall we give all men reason to conclude, that whatever we may profess, real christianity has no power over our hearts or lives? Let us not presume to retain the christian name, if we are so entirely destitute of the christian spirit, lest we draw upon our heads that awful censure, *Thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead.*

A meek and gentle disposition, amidst the strife of interfering interests, prevents the violence of contention, renews endearments, softens animosities, and keeps alive the seeds of harmony. Banish this temper of mind from a religious society, and suppose a body of men of angry, resentful and contentious spirits, and you have, instead of a christian church, a house of strife, a *den of wolves, ready to bite and devour one another*, and in danger of being *consumed one of another.*

ther. The solitude of a desert is preferable to such society.

In respect to those who differ from us in religious opinions, we should make allowances for their education, the power of the prejudices they have early imbibed, and the influence of others over them. We should not exclaim against every mistake as heresy, or every error as blasphemy. This is harsh and unchristian-like treatment, more likely to irritate and harden, than to convince or inform.

Religious disputes are seldom managed with the coolness and calmness of temper, which are becoming the gospel of Christ. In those points of doctrine wherein wise and good men are differently minded, meekness and modesty should teach us not to be too confident, nor to censure and condemn those that differ from us, as if *we were the people, and wisdom should die with us.*

It is a humiliating consideration, and cannot be thought of without grief and shame, that there never have been greater, more outrageous, or more inveterate and lasting dissensions in the world, than among those called Christians, and upon the ground of their religious differences. The most inflexible animosities from age to age have been kept up on this score. Nothing, I am ready to conclude, hath brought greater

greater scandal on the good cause, or tended more to prejudice and harden the infidel race against our holy profession. Merciful God ! thou Author of peace, and Lover of concord, forgive the angry contentions of those who call themselves thy children !

Angry zeal for the popish cause made dreadful havock in the Irish massacre, in the reign of Charles I. The papists resolved to cut off all the protestants in *Ireland* at a stroke ; and neither age, sex, nor condition had any pity. In this indiscriminate slaughter neither former benefits, nor alliances, nor authority were any protection. Numberless were the instances of friends murdering their intimates, relations their kinsmen, and servants their masters. In vain did flight save from the first assault ; destruction met the hunted victims at every turn. Not only death, but studied cruelties, were inflicted on the unhappy sufferers. The very avarice of the enraged revoltors could not restrain their thirst for blood, and they burned the inhabitants in their own houses, to increase their punishment. Several hundreds were driven upon a bridge ; and from thence obliged, by these barbarians, to leap into the water, where they were drowned.

In some places, the protestants were driven from their houses, to meet the severity of the

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weather, without food or raiment; and numbers of them perished with the cold, which happened at that time to be peculiarly severe.

By some accounts, those who perished by all these cruelties, are made to amount to an hundred and fifty, or two hundred thousand; but, by a moderate computation, they could not be less, according to our most impartial historians, than forty or fifty thousand.

I cannot wholly suppress, though I am unwilling to enlarge upon, the persecution which the nonconformists, or dissenters from the establishment underwent in *England* for many years.—When ministers and persons of private character lost their all, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, by heavy fines. Many were put in close confinement, their houses rifled and plundered, and not a few had their habitations burnt to the ground. The remembrance of those days of affliction is far from being pleasing. It has been computed, that among those who suffered for conscience sake in this kingdom, the loss of near twenty millions sterling was sustained by one means and another. Ten, or according to the lowest reckoning, eight thousand persons, imprisoned for non-conformity, lost their lives in prisons and dungeons in those afflictive times.

6. When

6. When we are angry at reproof. The wrathful man flies in the face of his reprover, and says with the *Egyptian* to Moses, *Who made thee a judge over us?* *Exod. ii. 14.* We should not fall upon our admonisher with railing speeches, fretting that he has found out our sore. But we should submit with meekness, and lay our souls under conviction, provided the reproof is just. *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil that shall not break my head.* It will heal the wounds that sin has given, and make my face to shine. It is most ungrateful to be angry with a kind reprover, who has our welfare at heart, and warns us of that which would be pernicious to us. Then, if ever, our anger is to be condemned. When he that reproveth in the gate, is hated for his faithfulness, it may truly be said that iniquity abounds, and love waxeth cold.

A good man, says *Seneca*, rejoiceth when he is admonished. A wicked man cannot endure a reprover. If we do that which deserves a rebuke, and our friends are so just and kind as to deal faithfully with us, we ought not to quarrel with them, and return hatred for their love. We should *suffer the word of exhortation*, and take it patiently and kindly. Thus *David* blessed God

for *Abigail's* counsel, and thanked her as his messenger. He hearkened to her voice, and accepted her person. The reprover may magnify the offence; his admonition may be defective in point of prudence; yet in the main, it is a real instance of kindness, and it would be highly criminal to resent it.

It was no disparagement to *Naaman*, to hearken to the reproof of his servant, when he turned away from the prophet, in a rage. It is recorded to his honour. *As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.* These two excellencies are rarely to be found, a wise reprover, and an obedient ear; but when found they are of great value.

7. When our anger provokes us to wish or desire any thing unlawful.

When we are provoked to wish that the object of our anger may suffer some considerable inconvenience, our anger rises to malevolence: especially when we desire that some lasting mischief may attend the offending party. Perhaps the tender and affectionate parent, who, on some just ground, is angry with the child whom he dearly loves, may lawfully wish his child some present pain, in order to amend and cure his folly. This seems to be implied in the nature of parental correction. And the end of it is the child's

child's real advantage. But to wish some lasting mischief to befall the object of our resentment, is base, malicious, and wicked.

Nor can those sudden wishes for our own death which violent anger sometimes produces, be at all excused. *It is better for me, said the angry prophet, to die than to live; I do well to be angry, even unto death.* Moses is celebrated for his meekness; and yet some expressions he used on certain trying occasions, indicate a defect even in that for which he is most commended. Num. xi. 15. *If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, and let me not see my wretchedness.*

8. When we use unlawful means to avenge ourselves, we sin in our anger. It is defined to be a desire of revenge for some injury offered. Though this distinction, perhaps, may not be accurate, it is certain that men of hot and heady tempers are too often desirous of vengeance, as soon as ever they fancy themselves injured. Hence, punishments are inflicted disproportioned to the offence. This is criminal. And the error is still more aggravated when the offence is only imaginary. Where a real injury of consequence is sustained, religion forbids us not to seek proper and adequate reparation. But calm and cool deliberation is necessary in order to this.

To have a secret fixed resolution to avenge ourselves, is base and diabolical. A celebrated moralist hath expressed himself with great energy on this subject. "What shall we think of him who hath a soul so infected, that he can never be happy till he hath made another miserable! What wars may we imagine perpetually raging in his breast? What dark stratagems, unworthy designs, inhuman wishes, dreadful resolutions! A serpent curled in many intricate mazes, ready to sting a traveller, and to hiss him in the pangs of death, is no unfit emblem of such an artful, unsearchable projector."

Condemned for ever be that false notion of honour which introduced, and still supports the practice of duelling. Who can think without horror on two rational beings, settling with cool and deliberate preparation, the circumstances for murdering each other! True courage enables a man rather to suffer than to sin, to pass by an affront than to destroy a soul, and plunge a man into eternity with all his loads of folly and fury about him. He that accepts a challenge, is, therefore, a coward, dreading the reproach of fools more than the wrath of Heaven; he that refuseth a challenge, lest he should sin against God, and injure his neighbour, despising the shame that might be cast upon him by the
thoughtless

thoughtless rabble, is the truly valiant man. He who can deny the brutal lust of revenge rather than violate the law of love, is truly resolute and courageous.

Mildness and fortitude are not inconsistent.

They may dwell together in the same breast.

Moses confronted Pharaoh in his own court, not fearing the wrath of the king. Yet he was the meekest of all the men on the earth. For he

endured as seeing him who is invisible.

It can never be esteemed, in the judgment of sober reason, an instance of wisdom or true courage, for a person to hazard his life, at the mere caprice of an inconsiderate and barbarous ruffian, who neither fears God nor regards man. On account of some mere punctilio, some trifling affront, he would take a savage pleasure in spilling my blood, cutting me off from all my dear social connections, and plunging me into eternity in a moment. Shall I put my own welfare, and that of my parents, my wife, my children, and other relatives, on a level with that of an impetuous barbarian, who gives me a challenge?

Because he is desperate enough to risk his life, shall I put mine in his hands, and give him leave to gratify his brutal humour, by lodging a ball in my breast, and leaving me weltering in my blood? If he has no regard for his family, shall

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I have none for them, or for my own? What an endless train of calamities might they be involved in, by a compliance with the diabolical challenge? To give a challenge is murderous, to accept it is to drink into the same spirit; since the latter implies a willingness either to fall a sacrifice to the challenger's rage, or to imbrue our hands in his blood, and, perhaps, plunge his soul into everlasting darkness. He that gives the challenge makes an attempt on the life of his fellow-creature, and thirsts for his blood; as such, he is a greater enemy to society, and commits a more flagrant outrage, than he that stops a passenger on the highway only to take his money from him. For what is a little present cash, that a man may chance to have in his pocket, in comparison with life, precious life, and the continued comfort of family and friends! Such a one, therefore, ought to be treated as an enemy to society, as a disturber of the peace, or as a felon. In such a light the mischievous practice we are speaking of was held, by *Pharamond*, king of the *Gauls*, whose edict against duels I beg leave to recite.

Whereas it has come to our royal notice and observation, that in contempt of all laws, divine and human, it is of late become a custom among the nobility and gentry of this our kingdom,

dom, upon slight and trivial, as well as great and urgent provocations, to invite each other into the field, there, by their own hands, and of their own authority, to decide their controversies by combat; we have thought fit to take the said custom into our royal consideration, and find, upon enquiry into the usual causes whereon such fatal decisions have arisen, that by this wicked custom, maugre all the precepts of our holy religion, and the rules of right reason, the greatest act of the human mind, *forgiveness of injuries*, is become vile and shameful; that the rules of good society and virtuous conversation are hereby inverted; that the loose, the vain, and the impudent, insult the careful, the discreet, and the modest; that all virtue is suppressed, and all vice supported, in the one act of being capable to dare to death. We have also further, with great sorrow of mind, observed that this dreadful action, by long impunity, (our royal attention being employed upon matters of more general concern) is become honourable, and the refusal to engage in it ignominious. In these our royal cares and enquiries, we are yet farther made to understand, that the persons of most eminent worth, of most hopeful abilities, accompanied with the strongest passion for true glory, are such as are most liable to be involved in the dangers arising from

from this licence. Now taking the said premises into our serious consideration, and well weighing, that all such emergencies (wherein the mind is incapable of commanding itself, and where the injury is too sudden, or too exquisite to be borne) are particularly provided for by laws heretofore enacted; and that the qualities of less injuries, like those of ingratitude, are too nice, and delicate to come under general rules; we do resolve to blot this fashion, or wantonness of anger, out of the minds of our subjects, by our royal resolutions declared in this edict, as follows:

No person who either sends or accepts a challenge, or the posterity of either, though no death ensues thereupon, shall be, after the publication of this our edict, capable of bearing office in these our dominions.

The person who shall prove the sending or receiving a challenge, shall receive to his own use and property, the whole personal estate of both parties; and their real estate shall be immediately vested in the next heir of the offenders, in as ample a manner, as if the said offenders were actually deceased.

In cases where the laws (which we have already granted to our subjects) admit of an appeal for blood; when the criminal is condemned by the said appeal, he shall not only suffer death, but his

his whole estate, real, mixed, and personal, shall, from the hour of his death, be vested in the next heir of the person whose blood he spilt.

That it shall not hereafter be in our royal power, or that of our successors, to pardon the said offences, or restore the offenders to their estates, honour, or blood, for ever.

Given at our court, at *Blois*, the eighth of February, 420, in the second year of our reign."

Our anger is certainly criminal when it excites us to render evil for evil to him who has injured or offended us. This is constantly condemned by the rules of our holy religion. Let the man be a friend or a foe that has acted an unrighteous and injurious part towards us, we should beware of giving way to revengeful or passionate resentments, which may lead us to seek the hurt of the offender, by way of retaliation. This would be to imitate his evil example, and to become sharers in his guilt.

No provocation should ever irritate us so far as to abate our concern for peace. We should keep so strict a watch over our angry passions, as never to meditate and contrive, much less to attempt any thing by way of private and personal revenge. If we are under the necessity of seeking satisfaction from those who have injured us, in a due course of law, we should never do it
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from a litigious spirit, but from a desire to preserve peace and good order in society, and to obtain justice to ourselves from the affronts and injuries we have received from unreasonable and wicked men.

Vengeance belongs to the Supreme Ruler and Judge of the universe. It is his right and prerogative to inflict deserved punishment. Let us never, therefore, presume so far as to attempt to wrest the sceptre out of his hands ; but leaving our cause with him, let us be ready to do all offices of kindness and compassion, even to the worst of our enemies. Let us *bleſs them that curſe us, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us, and perſecute us.* Let no ill-treatment we meet with from others ſo far inflame our angry paſſions, as to make us deſirous of *rendering evil for evil*, or even to cauſe us to grow weary of ſhewing love and kindneſs to them. Let us evidence the power of divine grace on our hearts, by exerciſing meekneſs, kindneſs and forbearance under the higheſt provocations. This is the way, not to be *overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.* Rom. xii. 21.

9. When our anger unfits us for the diſcharge of duty to one another. Violent anger ruffles our temper, and diſturbs our reaſon ; and, as ſuch, unfits us for the duties of life. It darkens the

the mind, burdens the conscience, and put the whole soul out of frame.

Giving and receiving reproof are duties of great utility. If a brother be overtaken with a fault, we should *restore such a one*; but this can only be done in *the spirit of meekness*. Reproof should never be given with a wrathful heart, and angry tongue. For *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*. In like manner, it should be received with humility and gratitude. We should be thankful to our kind reprover for his care, and offer up our prayers to God for him.

We are commanded to *be pitiful, and tender-hearted, to bear one another's burdens, to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice, to love as brethren, to follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another*. And whatever temper of mind unfits us for these duties, it is wrong, it is offensive to God, it is mischievous and hurtful.

Some men confess themselves negligent on slight occasions, and in the ordinary course of life, of the government of their temper; but they are attentive, as they pretend, to the great duties of charity and beneficence, whenever any remarkable opportunity presents itself of performing important services to society. But let

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such persons remember, that virtue must be formed and supported, not by unfrequent acts; but by continual and daily exertions. It should not, like the blaze of a comet, break forth only, occasionally with a transient lustre. It ought to be regular in its course, like the light of day. In the common transactions of life, and the intercourse of domestic society, the government of our temper is absolutely necessary, for promoting the happiness of those with whom we daily converse. In the conjugal relation, the care of the husband is *to please his wife*, and the care of the wife is *to please her husband*. This mutual endeavour to oblige is of great importance, and highly conducive to domestic happiness.

No man who is hurried away by ungovernable passion, can perform the duties of his station with regularity.

Our anger is sinful, when we are displeased with the providence of God—when we are angry with his laws—or with the doctrines of the gospel—when we are angry with the good we see in others—when we are angry with those who differ from us in religious sentiments—when we are angry at reproof—when our anger provokes us to wish or desire any thing unlawful—when we use forbidden means to avenge ourselves
—and

—and when our anger unfits us for the discharge of duty to one another.

C H A P. V.

Cautions against violent and sinful Anger.

1. **I**T destroys our own peace of mind. How serene and peaceful a region would every man's soul be to himself, if heavenly meekness did but reign in his breast, to the suppression of anger, wrath, malice and bitterness! The heathen moralist represents this to us by a comparison drawn from the celestial regions. "The upper and better ordered part of the world, next the stars, is driven together into no cloud, hurried into no tempest, never tost about in any whirlwind, but is ever free from any thing of tumult. Only the inferior regions throw about thunder and lightnings. So is the sublime mind always quiet, in a state of undisturbed tranquillity, sober, venerable and composed."

It is true, there may be a quiet behaviour outwardly, either through constraint, or with some base and disguised design, while in the meantime, the soul is rough, and turbulent; the words may be *softer than oil, while war is in the heart.*

But if our carriage is stormy and morose, we cannot have peace within.

By the frequent indulgence of this furious passion, it gains strength, and becomes habitual; and then, a man's internal tranquillity is nearly at an end. He will kindle into a flame at the first touch of provocation. He will not be able to retain his resentment, even till he has full proof of the offence; neither will he proportion his anger to the cause which excites it, or regulate it by any decency or discretion. A man thus enslaved is to be ranked among the unhappiest of mortals. He grows still more miserable as he sinks in years. Disease and infirmity increase the distemper of his mind. His friends desert him, being weary of his peevishness, and he is left, as one of the ancients strikingly expresses himself, to devour his own heart in solitude and contempt. He may disguise his sufferings before the world. But to be inwardly torn with wrathful and revengeful passions, is to be truly miserable. Thus the punishment is connected with the crime. *Thy own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee. It is an evil thing and bitter, that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord.*

When humility and meekness reign within, we are least in hazard of being ruffled by outward

ward occurrences. But if the clouds of disgust and ill-humour gather on the mind, every object is blackened to our view, and the slightest accident heightens our disquietude. That inward serenity which is the first requisite of every pleasurable feeling, is destroyed, and we behold every thing in the most unfavourable light.

The meek and patient man is happily superior to all those slight provocations, and trifling offences which wound the tranquillity of others. He is exempted from numberless disquietudes which agitate those of a contrary disposition.

As fire kindleth fire, so that which provokes anger is the anger of others. But meekness enables us to turn away the wrath of our neighbour, and to keep possession of our own souls. It teacheth us, either not to speak at all, to curb the tongue, and to *keep the mouth as with a bridle*; or to give a *soft answer*. It is said of *Naphtali*, that he *gave goodly words*, and, as such, he had the happiness to be *satisfied with favour*. *For every man will kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.*

The meek man's thoughts are calm, his purposes are composed, his prospects rational, and his affections regular. He is free from many of the pains and tortures of those angry souls who vex themselves with trifles; whose reason is be-

wildered, and whose affections are hurried on with an *impetus* as uneasy as it is hazardous. He has that peace which the world can neither give nor destroy, while the fretful and passionate eat the bread of sorrow, in pursuit of revengeful projects. He *delights himself with the abundance of peace*. He has ten thousand times more satisfaction in forgiving injuries than others can have in revenge.

The character which is given of that cruel and furious monarch, King Henry VIII. towards the latter part of his life, is very striking. "When bodily diseases prevailed upon him, and particularly a pain in his leg, he was more furious than a chained lion. He had been ever stern and severe; but he was then outrageous. In this state he continued for near four years before his death, the terror of all, and the tormentor of himself. As his end approached, his anguish and remorse were such as cannot be described."

2. It hurts the unity of spirit among brethren.

Were but the minds of christians more eminently *clothed with humility*, and habited with the *meekness and gentleness of Christ*, what a blessed calm would it introduce into religious societies! It might then be truly said of the christian church, *This is the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.*

A learned,

A learned, pious and candid writer on the absurdity and injustice of religious bigotry and persecution, has these words, "Could we see the members of Christ's mystical body, divested of bigotry and prejudice, no longer divided by parties and factions, nor stained and sullied by viciousness of life; joined together by an union of friendly dispositions, and kind affections, and vying with each other in the promotion of mutual benevolence and good will, this would give us the strongest idea, we can at present have, of the happiness of the future world, and of those sublime social pleasures, which the righteous shall enjoy, when they come to the *city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to God the judge of all, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*"

Some men seem to be of such a disposition, that they are not only careless of pleasing, but studious to offend. They imagine that they aggrandize themselves by mortifying those about them, and teasing them with affronts. They delight in wanton provocations, and contemptuous insolence. This is tyranny. It arises from that excess of pride which can never be quietly endured by mankind. It provokes the resentment of those about us; and thus the peace of society is disturbed.

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Some are so morose and ill-natured, so sudden and so noisy in their resentment, that there is no peace or rest to be enjoyed near them. They interrupt the quiet of all who are so unhappy as to be within the reach of their clamours.

Among the disciples of the lowly Jesus, *nothing should be done through strife, or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, each should esteem others better than himself.*

Some good men are so unhappily addicted to warmth of temper, that the poet's enquiry concerning his angry deities, seems applicable to them, *Can so much wrath be found in heavenly minds?* When we meet with provocations from men of this cast, it is most eligible and honourable, so far to suppress the heat of our own temper, as to endeavour to turn away their wrath with a soft answer, Prov. xv. 1. *A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.* If we intemperately and unseasonably set ourselves to oppose them, we shall but irritate them more and more. If mildness will not overcome them, it is best perhaps, to *give place to their wrath*, by leaving them room and time to cool, in keeping out of their way. Escape to a calmer shore.

Without a degree of candor, forbearance and mutual love, the peace of christian societies cannot

not be maintained. There must be reciprocal endeavours to *maintain the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.* When the members of a religious community are meek and lowly, full of kindness and benevolence one towards another, then, and then only, they *adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour*, and exemplify the true spirit of christianity. They are then cautious of inflicting the least wound on a brother's mind. They are affable in their address, and mild in their behaviour; ever ready to oblige, and as willing to be obliged by others. Reproofs are administered with the greatest tenderness; and good offices performed with ease and modesty. No one is assuming in his opinions, or intemperate in his zeal about lesser matters. No one is self-willed, forward to contradict, or eager to blame. Every one thinks it his duty and his honour to be *clothed with humility, and to put on*, in his whole behaviour, that *charity which is the bond of perfectness.* Every one seeks to *please his neighbour, for his good unto edification*; to conceal that superiority of rank or talents which might be oppressive to the weak of the flock; to be *kind and tender-hearted*, to be pitiful and courteous; and in a word, to evidence himself to be under the influence of the *wisdom from above*, which is *pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy,*

mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Of such a society it may be said the beauty of the Lord our God is upon them.

With some persons, to speak and to offend are but one and the same thing. Their words are fraught with gall and wormwood, from a proud and malevolent disposition. The dull, the stupid and the mute are to be preferred to these. They are not satisfied with giving sharp answers; they insolently attack the present, and wound the character of the absent.

Some domestic connections are dreadfully disturbed by feuds, jealousies, and antipathies, at the same time that they outwardly seem easy, affectionate and cheerful; and we suppose they enjoy a quiet to which they are strangers. Your visit which you make them, only suspends a domestic quarrel, which waits but for your absence to be renewed. Or if you are so unhappy as to reside with such persons as are engaged in perpetual quarrels, they will tease you to hear their mutual complaints, and you will live, as it were, in a court of justice, and be pestered from morning to night with pleadings.

3. It blocks up our way to the divine throne. If we attempt to draw near to God with rancour and wrath in our hearts, he will not hear our prayers. *First go and be reconciled to thy brother,*

brother, and then come, and offer thy gift. No wrathful temper must be indulged if we would *lift up holy hands* to God. 1 Tim. ii. 8. Bitterness, wrath and evil-speaking must therefore be laid aside, if we desire to hold converse with God, and to *have fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ*. We are not to expect forgiveness with our Maker, *unless we from our hearts forgive others*. So far does a wrathful temper unfit us for devotion.

Can we come boldly to the throne of grace so long as we cherish wrath in our bosoms? It indisposes us for the duty; and renders it, if performed, unacceptable to God. The tumult of our passions makes us both unable and unwilling to pray; and should we attempt it in such a spirit, God will not hear.

4. It frequently exposes a man to danger. When an angry man meets with a fury like himself, they frequently fall into mischief. A rude hectoring fellow lately passing through the streets of a certain town, jostled another who stood in his way; the offended party, equal to him in brutality, drew his sword and spilt his blood. *It is an honour to a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling* to his hurt. Wise men turn away wrath, but *a fool's lips enter into contention, his mouth calleth for strokes* and he sometimes

sometimes receives them, as the just reward of his insolence. No one draws his sword, or cocks his pistol at the meek and inoffensive lamb; but the noisy barking cur frequently feels the lash. The dispassionate escape many troubles which the angry and revengeful pull down on their own heads. *A soft answer turns away wrath; a soft tongue breaks the bone.* The kindness of *David* overcame *Saul*; and the meekness of *Jacob* melted the heart of *Esau*.

5. It makes work for bitter repentance. We frequently hear of parents who, undertaking to correct their children in a fit of passion, have been so unhappy as to occasion irreparable mischief to their helpless off-spring. What must they feel on every sight of their afflicted children, thus disabled by their fury! What stings of remorse must attend them through every succeeding day of their lives!

Who can think of the condition to which *Cain* had reduced himself by his rage and murder, without horror? Stung with the keenest anguish and remorse, he was a terror to himself wherever he came, and dreaded by all who knew him. He cried out in the bitterness of his soul, *My punishment is greater than I can bear.* No sorrow can repair the mischief. An age cannot recompence what has been done in an instant

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in wrath and fury. "There are a thousand evils," saith *Seneca*, included in this one of anger, and diversified into a thousand different branches."

The greatest part of the disasters which men suffer in this life, are brought upon them by their own ungoverned passions. Should they escape the external mischiefs which these passions naturally occasion, they cannot shun the internal misery which they certainly produce. The government of the world is maintained with such depth of wisdom, that the divine laws execute themselves against the sinner, and carry their sanction along with them. There is no need for the prisons of hell to be unlocked, or the thunders of heaven to be poured forth, in order to punish the wrathful and the cruel man. It is enough that those furious passions which render such persons the disturbers of others, be suffered to burn and rage within them, and that they be delivered up to the horrors of their own guilty minds. *The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear.*

6. It prevents us from doing or receiving good. A drunken man in the height of his intoxication, is looked upon as so far from being fit to receive or impart instruction, that he is considered as no longer master of his own con-

duct or language. He seems to act without consciousness, and to rush into mischief without apprehension of danger. As such, he is either pitied or despised by those about him, and for the time, is hardly entitled to the rank of rational beings. It is much the same with him who is intoxicated with passion.

Such a man cannot gain much influence over any but those who are necessarily his dependents. He may frighten his children or his servants, but if his eyes were open, he might easily see, that while he tramples on those who cannot resist him, he is not revered for his virtue, but dreaded or despised for his brutality; and that he lives only to excite the contempt or hatred of society.

He that has his *hand against every man*, need not wonder if *every man's hand is against him*. He lives in a state of war with mankind, as he is destitute of that meekness which is the cement of society, that love which is the *bond of perfectness*, that *charity which covers a multitude of sins*. In the present state of imperfection, mutual allowances are necessary to mutual usefulness.— Without such allowances, variance, strife and contention will keep us perpetually at a distance from each other, and prevent us both from doing good to our fellow-creatures, and receiving good from them.

7. It fires the minds of those about us. The associates and domestics of an angry man live with suspicion and solicitude, as in the presence of a tame lion or tiger, watching the capricious savage, and expecting the moment when he will begin his tremendous roar. And when he breaks forth in unreasonable reproaches, it is no wonder that the breasts of those about him are kindled into resentment. Hence mutual animosities prevail, and who can tell where the mischief may end? It is *better to dwell in the corner of a house top, than with such a one in the most splendid and spacious palace.* Grievous words stir up anger in those that hear them.

Meekness prepossesses and gains the hearts of our opponents. It persuades when every other argument proves ineffectual. It disarms the violent, and softens the stubborn mind. On the other hand, the heat of anger confirms the opposition it intends to subdue, raises the resentment of those who were indifferent, and even turns our very friends into enemies.

A judicious writer on this subject has justly observed, that in the ruffled and angry hour, we view every appearance through a false medium. The most inconsiderable point of interest, or honour, swells into a momentous object; and the slightest attack seems to threaten immediate ruin.

But after passion or pride is subdued, we look round in vain for the mighty mischiefs we dreaded. The fabric which our disturbed imagination had reared, totally disappears. But though the cause of contention has dwindled away, its consequences remain. We have irritated the passions of others. We have alienated a friend; we have embittered an enemy; we have sown the seeds of future suspicion, malevolence or disgust. *He that is hasty in his spirit, exalteth folly.*

8. It makes us unlike the meek and lowly Jesus. That mind which was in him should be in us. He was patient under the rudest injuries and most barbarous treatment. The vilest affronts were offered to him, and yet he was meek as a lamb. *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not. He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting.* For the greatest evil he returned the greatest good. He shed his blood, and gave his life to redeem those from hell who treated him with disdain. And while they mocked his dying agonies, *shot out the lip, and wagged the head,* he cried, *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.* While we admire this amiable and lovely part of the dear Redeemer's conduct, let us remember, that *he*
has

has left us an example that we should walk in his steps. But ah! how unlike him are we, when we suffer angry passions to rise on the most trifling occasions!

No harshness, no pride, no stately distance of behaviour appeared in our divine Master, during his intercourse with men upon earth. He was easy of access, mild in his answers, condescending, lowly and obliging in his whole demeanour. This distinguishing part of his character was so generally known, that the apostle *Paul*, in order to gain the hearts of his followers, and engage them to a compliance with what he proposes, uses this form of address, *I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.* Let us cultivate a humble, kind, gentle temper. This was the temper of our divine Leader. This is the temper of the inhabitants of heaven. Let this temper also be in us. Then shall we escape the miseries which always accompany an arrogant and resentful mind.

The religion which Jesus has established, has this distinguishing peculiarity, that it teaches all who profess it, to *forgive their enemies*, and to *love those that hate them.* How unworthy shall we be of the name of christians, and followers of Christ, if we give way to fretfulness, anger, and a revengeful spirit! Let us *love our enemies, bless*

them that curse us, and pray for them who despitefully use us, and persecute us.

9. It makes us resemble madmen and devils. The Latins call a meek person, *mansuetus* ; q. d. used to the hand. The allusion is to the nature of the contrary disposition. It makes a man like a furious wild beast, a lion or a tiger ; or the *swift dromedary traversing her ways*, Jer. ii. 23, 24. Whereas, when the grace of meekness reigns, it transforms the lion into a lamb, we then are used to the hand, we submit to management ; *the leopard lies down with the kid, and a little child may lead them.* Isai. xi. 6.

Saul, the king of *Israel*, when the violence of his passion prevailed, appeared like a fury. When *David* was absent he stormed and raged with the fierceness of a lion ; when present, he whirled his javelin at him, to smite him against the wall.

We see the distraction which violent anger occasions in the character of *Haman*. We can scarcely conceive a person more thoroughly wretched than he appears to have been, even when surrounded with power, opulence and pleasure. One private man, who despised his greatness, and disdained submission, while a whole kingdom trembled before him, made him completely miserable. He was lost to all enjoyment, through the fierceness of his passion ; he was
stung

stung by disappointment, torn and distracted by rage, beyond what he was able to bear. He made that humiliating confession, *All this avail-eth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.* This was not a private soliloquy of *Haman's* within himself, but a confession which he made to others; and as such, it proves that his misery was become insupportable. Every man strives to conceal such shocking agitations of mind, as he must know they are a dishonour to him. The violence of anguish alone can drive him to confess a passion which renders him odious and despicable. Yet *Haman* breaks through all restraints, and publishes his shame even to his own family and friends, from whom every man is naturally disposed to conceal his dishonour. A striking proof of the height of his distraction and disorder.

Violent and unguarded anger makes a man a fool, to cast *firebrands, arrows and death*, in the sport of his fury.

10. It is cruel and murderous. We have a striking instance of this in the first family of mankind. *Cain* was angry with his brother *Abel*, because his own works being evil and his brother's righteous, Heaven smiled upon the one, and frowned upon the other. *Cain* cherished his resentment to that degree, that he thirsted for

for *Abel's* life, and at last imbrued his hands in his own brother's blood. Many of the evils to which the life of man is exposed arise from anger protracted into malevolence, and exerted in revenge. Many of the dreadful calamities which fill the histories of past ages, have originated here. We could scarcely read these accounts without some doubt of the veracity of the historians, did we not see the same causes still tending to the same effects.

What tides of human blood have been shed, how many cities have been subverted, how many countries have been desolated, and how many nations massacred to gratify this cruel and furious passion !

How solemn and striking is the exclamation of the dying patriarch *Jacob*, concerning his two sons ! *Simeon and Levi are brethren ; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united ; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce ; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* Gen. xlix.

The wrathful man is cruel to his neighbour. As in the case above ; and in that of *Jezebel* with

with *Naboth*. He is cruel to his children and servants. He is cruel to the very beast which carries him, and does his drudgery. *A good man regards the life of his beast ; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.* Thus *Balaam* only wished for a sword that he might slay his innocent beast. How many excellent and useful creatures groan under the cruelty of furious men ! When they exert themselves to the utmost stretch of their ability, they are still beaten without mercy. We need not indeed wonder at the wrathful man's cruelty to his beast ; since his cruelty has been displayed against his Saviour, in whom innocence and perfection shone in their brightest lustre. *When they heard these things, they were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong.* Luke iv. 27, 28, 29. The wrathful man is cruel even to himself. Many have died in a fit of rage. The tortured soul has rushed forth from its clay tenement, among fiends and furies, its fittest companions. Thus it is said by the inspired penman, *Wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.* Job. v. 2.

Let us learn to suspend our violence and govern our tempers when causes of discord arise. Let us allow ourselves time to think how little

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we have any prospect of gaining by fury and rage, and how much of the true happiness of life we are sure of throwing away.

Wrath is cruel. *Astyages*, king of *Persia*, being displeased with *Harpagus*, invited him to supper, and caused that miserable parent to feed on the flesh of his own son, and then asked him how he liked the repast.

When *Darius* had subdued *Scythia*, *Oebasus*, a nobleman whom he had conquered, requested of the tyrant, that he would leave one of his three children to comfort his distressed father, and content himself with the service of the other two; the conqueror promised that he would dismiss them all; and hereupon caused them all to be slain, and the dead bodies to be cast at the feet of the unhappy father.

Alexander at a festival, murdered his own friend *Clitus*, because he would not flatter him in his follies; and exposed *Lyfimachus* to the fury of a lion.

Nebuchadnezzar being full of fury against *Shadrach*, *Mesheck*, and *Abednego*, caused them to be cast into a fiery furnace, heated to seven-fold rage.

Lucius Sylla in his anger against *Marcus Marius*, caused his legs to be broken, his eyes to be pulled out, his hands to be cut off, and his body to be torn asunder.

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The Honourable Commodore *Byron* was an eye-witness to the following shocking scene of brutal rage, on the coasts of *Patagonia*. I beg leave to present the reader with it in his own words.

“ Here I must relate a little anecdote of our *christian* cacique. He and his wife had gone off, at some distance from the shore, in their canoe, when she dived for sea-eggs ; but not meeting with great success, they returned a good deal out of humour. A little boy of theirs, about three years old, whom they appeared to be doatingly fond of, watching for his father and mother’s return, ran into the surf to meet them. The father handed a basket of sea-eggs to the child, which being too heavy for him to carry, he let it fall ; upon which the father jumped out of the canoe, and catching the boy up in his arms, dashed him with the utmost violence against the stones. The poor little creature lay motionless and bleeding, and in that condition was taken up by the mother ; but died soon after. She appeared inconsolable for some time ; but the brute his father shewed little concern about it.”

Thus we have seen, that sinful anger destroys our own peace of mind—hurts the unity of the spirit among brethren—blocks up our way to the Divine Throne—exposes us to danger—makes
work

work for bitter repentance—fires the minds of others—makes us unlike the meek and lowly Jesus—causes us to resemble madmen and devils, and, is cruel and murderous.

CHAP. VI.

The Character of Protervus.

PROTERVUS was notorious in his childhood for his genius in pranks of mischief and malevolence. His fond and foolish parents instead of restraining him, praised his parts, admired him for his address and courage, and prided themselves in what they called the seeds of heroism and prowess. Finding this the road to honour and applause, young *Protervus* was quickened in his course, and proceeded from one degree of malignity to another, till he became the scourge of society.

When arrived to years of maturity, the rashness and ungoverned passion of *Protervus* pushed him on to a hasty and irregular conduct. His lips often poured out foolishness, and through the impatience of his spirit, he rushed into many snares, and sometimes involved his best friends in the same mischief.

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It is confessed *Protervus* had sometimes honest and honourable projects in his head. But the violence of his temper was such that he was easily diverted from the point he should have kept in sight. He pursued nothing with that steadiness which is necessary in order to success.

He was very easily offended. And his resentment was consequently often founded on misunderstandings, and wrong interpretations of words or actions. That which a small share of humility and charity would have passed over in silence, *Protervus* swelled into a great and heinous provocation. He never could suspend his anger till facts were ascertained, and the truth examined. When once displeased he was inflexibly severe, and resolutely implacable. The truth of this will appear from the following relation.

The unhappy *Ærumnosus* offended his neighbour *Protervus*. I do not now perfectly recollect the circumstances of the case. But *Ærumnosus* soon found that he had incurred the resentment of one whose tender mercies were cruel. A rigorous prosecution was entered against him. His humiliating confessions, his willingness to make all the satisfaction in his power, the earnest supplications of his distressed wife, and seven helpless children, were of no avail. *Ærumnosus* was sent to the county jail, he was tried, cast,

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and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. On the side of *Protervus* there was power, but the unfortunate *Ærunnosus* had no comforter. I had the following account of his distressed situation, from one who saw him in his confinement.

“ I was told by the keeper that that was the cell of *Ærunnosus*. I looked through the twilight of his grated door, and saw his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer, I saw him pale and feverish: in twelve years the western breeze had not fanned his blood—he had seen no sun, no moon in all that time—nor had the voice of a friend breathed through his lattice.

He was sitting upon the ground on a little straw, in the farthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed: a little calender of small sticks were laid at the head, notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there—he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door, then cast it down—shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs,

legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle—he gave a deep sigh—I saw the iron enter into his soul—I burst into tears, and withdrew, deeply impressed with the propriety of petitioning the Father of mercies to have compassion on “all prisoners and captives.”

But the unfeeling heart of *Protervus* was incapable of commiseration. The unhappy *Ærum-nosus* languished away in his fetters till death released him.

Protervus looked upon himself as a man of consequence, and would assume overbearing and lofty airs, because he had more money than his neighbours. He was better dressed, and better fed than many of his fellow-creatures, and he loved to aggrandize himself in his own esteem, in his language, and in his behaviour on that account. His vanity, his haughtiness and insolence were insufferable. He would treat his servants as if they were dogs. He forgot that a poor man was made of the same clay, and descended from the same common parent with himself. His servants hated him, and seldom continued long under his roof. When he stood in need of any assistance from them, he could brook no delay; he would make no allowances for the various accidents which always attend human life, and may stop the speed of the most diligent and active servant.

He would be perpetually railing at them, or backbiting them, and on the slightest failure in their duty, he would storm and rage like a chained lion.

Protervus was captious, and ready to take exception and offence without just ground. Nor would he give up a prejudice once entertained, upon the best reasons offered, or the most condescending steps taken to satisfy him. He was so far from being won by kindness, that it only made him more insolent. Every concession emboldened his impetuosity. There was, in fact, no peace to be had with him, but by ceasing to have any thing to do with him.

He would treat those with whom he had dealings, with insolence and rudeness, with injurious and reflecting words. His language was indecent, provoking, and often outrageous. He was froward, and sowed strife.

He was unmercifully rigorous with those who were so unhappy as to stand indebted to him for sums of money which they were not immediately able to pay. He took a malicious pleasure in causing such to rot in the jail, as he used to express himself, though he would sometimes pray at church that God would forgive his debts as he forgave his debtors. And he now and then heard the lesson read in which it is solemnly declared,
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that he shall have judgment without mercy who hath shewed no mercy.

Debitor, one of his poor tenants, was by the loss of his cow and the blighting of his corn, rendered absolutely incapable of paying his annual rent in due time. The sum was but three pounds two shillings and six-pence.* *Protervus* went out one morning, and found this poor sufferer in the fields; he seized him by the throat as if he would have strangled him, and severely demanded immediate payment, saying, "Pay me that thou owest." *Debitor* fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all, only grant me a little forbearance, and I will discharge the whole sum; but at present, through the loss I have sustained, I am unable to do it." But *Protervus* had no tenderness towards him, he was deaf to his intreaties, he would not hear his cries, but went and cast him into prison until he should pay the debt.

Here this innocent but unhappy man was secluded from the common comforts of human life, oppressed with the corrosion of just but unavailing resentment, the heaviness of sorrow, the corruption of confined air, the want of usual exercise, and sometimes of food, the contagion

* An hundred pence. See Matt. xviii. 28, &c.

of diseases, from which there was no retreat, with all the other complicated horrors of a prison; while his wife and children, deprived of the support of his industry, and the consolation of his company, languished in wretchedness and misery because of the fury of the oppressor.

Protervus seemed to delight in vexing his fellow-creatures; he took a kind of malicious pleasure in giving them pain and torment. He was regardless of his neighbour's welfare, and lived only to himself. If he had but wealth and ease it was no matter of concern with him what calamities should befall the rest of mankind. He was rough, quarrellsome, ill-natured, fullen and greedy of revenge.

Death at length, that king of terrors, rid the world of this enemy of society. A raging fever seized his frame, and in a few days he breathed out his indignant soul, in distraction, horror and despair.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

The Character of Eugenius.

AS soon as *Eugenius* had a house and a family, he erected an altar in it; there the word of God was read and prayers were constantly offered. These were not omitted on account of any guest whom providence might conduct within those happy walls. For *Eugenius* esteemed it a part of due respect to those who were brought under his roof, to take it for granted they would look upon it as a very bad compliment, to imagine they would have been obliged, by neglecting the duties of religion on their account.

His character was uniformly regular and amiable; but he particularly excelled in that self-government which this essay is designed to promote.

His meekness of temper was not a mere natural disposition. It was a christian grace; a fruit of the spirit. It arose from religious principles; a regard to God's authority as enjoining it, and a sense of the evil and sinfulness of the contrary. He knew that to bear a hostile and revengeful disposition

disposition towards our neighbour, is highly offensive to God. On this ground, he constantly embraced all becoming methods for the cultivation and promotion of meekness and gentleness in himself and others. He followed peace with all men, and avoided every thing which might have a tendency to break it.

He was so far from allowing himself to do his neighbour a real injury, that he constantly endeavoured to conciliate and secure his affection, by all the offices of friendship and humanity. He was solicitous to make all about him easy and happy. It was a pleasure to him to contradict his own inclinations, and to deny himself; that he might serve the interests of his friends.

It was not indeed always possible for him to live in peace and amity with his neighbours. He sought peace, and pursued it, but it sometimes could not be attained.

In the course of his life he had to do with some of a perverse humour, and of unreasonable obstinacy. They were so captious as to take offence without any foundation. They would catch at the most innocent occasions to work up their minds to resentment. This made him very uncomfortable. He was often, in such a case, heard to cry, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesek, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My
foul

soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace ; but when I speak, they are for war." Some would not be at peace with him unless he would violate a good conscience. He could only do what he might do lawfully. He acted conscientiously towards God ; he could not wound his conscience for peace. If men were displeased with him for that, he could not help it. He would neither sacrifice truth nor holiness, though all the world should be angry with him for his zealous attachment to them.

But in what concerned himself, *Eugenius* was willing to sacrifice little things, and to recede from what was strictly his right in some cases, rather than make a breach, or perpetuate a quarrel with his neighbours. He took this to be one part of our Saviour's meaning in that remarkable injunction, " Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also ; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." He would meekly pass these things over for the sake of peace, especially when he had any reason to hope, that such soft treatment would make a good impression on those who should at any time treat him ill. He used frequently to speak of *Abraham's* mild and gentle

gentle carriage to *Lot*. When the herdsmen of *Abraham* and of *Lot* had quarrelled, the father of the faithful, instead of saying, "I have as much right as you to the country, or I have a superior right, as I am the elder, and the uncle," he spoke as follows, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? If thou wilt take the left hand, I will go to the right; or if thou wilt depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Eugenius was deeply sensible, that when a quarrel is begun, however innocently at first on one side, yet it scarcely ever happens but there are faults on both, in the progress of the contention. Mutual usefulness is obstructed; mutual reflections, evil surmises, undue resentments, and indecent sallies of passion can hardly be avoided in such a case. Therefore *Eugenius* thought it best, in many circumstances, to leave off contention before it were meddled with.

His soul was calm and composed. He breathed love and peace. And as such, he made it his study and business to be quiet, to promote the peace and welfare of mankind, and so far as it was in his power, to compose and settle his associates in amity and love.

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He was endowed with many divine gifts, he was adorned with virtue and merit, and yet he always seemed insensible of his own superiority ; he was mean in his own eyes, and drew a curtain of concealment before himself, that men might not observe him. If any were inclined to draw aside the veil, and make his merit visible, it gave pain to his modesty.

He condescended to men of low estate, would hear their requests and complaints, and converse familiarly with them on matters of importance. He remembered that the High and Lofty One, who inhabits eternity, visits the afflicted, and dwells with the poor and lowly. He was far from sinking his character by these condescensions, or doing any dishonour to his station in the world ; for all good men were constrained to love and honour him ; and indeed, it is difficult to determine whether he was most honoured, or most beloved.

If at any time, in conversation with his friends for mutual improvement, a debate arose, he would manage it with a liberality and calmness of mind which were truly amiable and edifying. If the power of the argument lay on his side, you would see nothing in him like insult and triumph. When his opponent had the advantage, he would readily acknowledge it, and modestly yield to the
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force of reason. He could sit and hear violent opposition made to his sentiments without kindling into flame and fury. He could bear to be contradicted without resenting it as an affront.

He was compassionate and merciful to the poor, afflicted and distressed. Their pains and diseases of body, their sorrows and troubles of mind, their necessitous circumstances, their unjust sufferings from those who oppressed them, and even the miseries brought upon themselves by their own imprudence, excited his sympathy and tenderness. In the distribution of his bounty, he was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the poor and the afflicted. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came on this amiable man, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. Those whom it was not in his power to relieve, were interested in his tender sympathy, his good wishes, and affectionate and fervent prayers. It was his meat and drink to be engaged in contriving, endeavouring, promoting, and rejoicing in the welfare and happiness of others. He lived not to himself. He sought not his own things, but the things of others. He studied not to please himself, but to please his neighbour, for his good, unto edification.

Some, who were themselves unacquainted with the power and comforts of religion, were
ready

ready to charge *Eugenius* with enthusiasm. I beg leave to say, that the charge was altogether unjust. And yet it must be owned, that if habitual love to God, firm faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a steady dependence on the divine promises, a high esteem for the blessings of the heavenly world, and a sincere contempt for the vanities of this, can properly be called enthusiasm, then was *Eugenius* one of the greatest enthusiasts our age has produced; and in proportion to the degree in which he was so, I must esteem him one of the wisest and happiest of mankind.

I mean not to say that *Eugenius* was perfect in love and meekness. It belongs not to human nature to possess these qualities in perfection. But it was his study and endeavour to come as near to the pattern of perfection exhibited in the character of the Saviour of mankind, as the frailty of a human being would admit; and he often mourned in secret on account of the defects of which he was conscious.

Thus he gained the esteem of his friends and associates. He was consulted by them as an oracle, and he saved many from distress, and even from ruin by his counsel and advice, as well as by his prudent and amiable example. Thus his conduct in life was of singular advantage to others as well as to himself.

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When he saw oppression and violence practised among men, he always took the part of the injured person, and he acquitted himself in such a manner, as to calm the resentment of the oppressed, and soften the oppressor, if not into pity and tenderness, at least to a compliance with the rules of equity.

He lived in a neighbourhood where he saw several sects of christians carried away with the furious torrent of rigorous notions, and where some were addicted to several practices bordering on superstition. They were frequently engaged in fierce contentions, and angry disputes. They could not live in peace, nor judge favourably of one another's state, motives or conduct. *Eugenius* beheld them with concern, and one day, falling into the company of several of these zealots, who belonged to different parties, he addressed them in the following manner.

“ My friends, I esteem and honour you all. Your zeal for truth and holiness is, in many respects, laudable. But the matters wherein you differ, are not, perhaps, so very important as you may imagine. The great truths and necessary duties of christianity should be very dear to us. We ought, if Providence calls us to it, to contend earnestly for the essential articles of faith once delivered to the saints. But, it ap-
pears

pears to me, that the points of difference among you are not of this kind. There are some truths, and some practices of less importance to the christian life. The things you dispute about are not of such a nature as that they should engross your chief attention. Your different conceptions about these things, since you are of one mind concerning matters of far greater consequence, should not lead you into these hot and angry disputes. You plainly see, that your contentions are to no profit; they sour your minds, they embitter your social interviews, they cool your affections to one another, and leave your souls barren and uncomfortable. The cultivation of meekness and mutual love, is of far greater importance than the peculiarities about which you contend. Let me intreat you to cease from strife, and to follow after the things that make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another."

I do not exactly know what success he had at this interview, but many have heard *Eugenius* pathetically lament the general unsuccessfulness of all endeavours to promote peace among those who are lovers of contention. He would often say, "How sadly do these persons mistake the nature and design of christianity! Were they worshippers of *Moloch*, or the advocates of *Ma-*

homet, their animosities might admit of some excuse."

Thus did this amiable man seek peace and pursue it; and the blessing pronounced on the head of the peace-maker, rested upon him. His own soul was tranquil and serene as the unruffled ocean. He was no enthusiast, as we have observed. He made no boast of his internal consolations; yet neither his eyes nor his aspect could restrain the expression of that celestial peace which reigned within.

Eugenius held himself and his abilities in very low estimation. A sense of his own meanness prevented him from being moved by any affront. He was so far from seeking the honour which cometh from men, that he seemed to take pleasure in being little and unknown.

It is rare to meet with an eminent person that can bear an equal. But it was *Eugenius's* choice and delight, to prefer every one to himself. And this he did in a manner so remote from affectation, so free and easy, that in him it appeared perfectly natural. He would not suffer any unkindness shewn to him to be mentioned again. If any instance of this happened to be named, he would say, "I beg we may let that drop, and enter on a new subject of conversation."

From this root of genuine humility sprung that
patience

patience which disposed him to submit to every cross with alacrity and pleasure. For the good of his neighbour, nothing seemed hard, nothing wearisome. He never thought any thing too mean but sin; he looked on nothing else as beneath his character. In bearing afflictions he was most exemplary, and continued more and more so in his last illness, of which we shall give a brief account by and by.

It is true, *Eugenius* was naturally a man of strong passions, and prone to anger in particular. But he humbled himself on this account, and implored with many tears and supplications, victory over his own spirit. And he did not seek in vain. He obtained what he sought and laboured after, in a very eminent degree. For many of the latter years of his life, no one ever saw him out of temper, or heard him utter a rash expression, on any provocation whatever. The testimony which Dr. *Burnet* bears of Arch-bishop *Leighton*, might be borne of *Eugenius* with equal propriety. "After an intimate acquaintance with the Arch-bishop for many years, and after being with him by night and by day, at home and abroad, in public and in private, on sundry occasions, and in various affairs; I must say, I never heard an idle word drop from his lips, nor any conversation which was not to the use of edify-

ing. I never saw him in any temper, in which I myself would not have wished to be found at death."

He was ever ready to bear with the weaknesses, and forgive the failings of others. He never mentioned the faults of an absent person, unless absolute necessity required it; and then he spoke with the utmost tenderness; extenuating, rather than aggravating the offence.

His courtesy was pure and genuine, without any art or affectation, constraining him to behave to every one with an inexpressible mixture of humility, love and respect. This directed his words, the tone of his voice, his looks, his whole attitude, his every motion. His behaviour was suited with a peculiar gracefulness to the persons, and the occasion.

Eugenius treated the wife of his bosom with a manly tenderness, giving her the most natural evidences of a cordial, habitual esteem; and expressing a most affectionate sympathy with her under all her infirmities. He had at all times a most faithful care of her interests, and especially those relating to the state of religion in her mind.

He took great care to instruct and admonish his children, and train them up in the way in which they should go. He thought an excess of delicacy, and of indulgence, one of the most dangerous

dangerous faults in education, by which he every where saw great numbers of young people undone. Yet he was gentle towards his dear offspring, as a nurse cherisheth her children. He was ever solicitous to guard against a severity which might terrify or discourage; and though he endeavoured to take all prudent precautions to prevent the commission of faults, yet, when at any time they had been committed, and there seemed to be a sense of them, he was always ready to make the most candid allowances for the thoughtlessness of unripened years, and tenderly to cherish every purpose of a more proper conduct for the time to come.

His behaviour to his servants was full of condescension, humanity and kindness. He would lay no heavier burdens upon them, nor exact any harder labour from them than they were able to bear. In case of slight miscarriages, he would forbear threatnings, and not gall and irritate them by words of abuse. He was sometimes heard to say among his particular friends, that he thought nothing could be more odious, or more contemptible, than for a man to pretend to be a disciple of Jesus, while he is a lion in his own house, and frantic or tyrannical over his servants and other domestics; and that the most melancholy and most mischievous object on earth,

earth, is a selfish, passionate, unmerciful governor of a family, calling himself a christian, and valuing himself on that account.—“Surely,” he would say, “the domestics of such a man, and all who observe his carriage towards them, will be tempted to despise that religion which they see joined with such rank and loathsome hypocrisy.”

He kept in view the transitory nature of all earthly glory, human distinctions and worldly honours. He remembered that the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof; that the rapid stream of time is carrying its proudest sons away, and burying them in oblivion; that the hour is approaching when all shall stand on a level, and the servant be free from his master; and then it will appear, that only he who hath done the will of God, whether in a humble or higher station, abideth for ever.

“The firmest human establishments,” he would say, “the best laboured systems of policy, are of no long duration. The mightiest states and nations perish like the individuals that compose them. In one leaf we read their history, we admire their achievements, we are interested in their successes; but proceed to the next, and no more than a name is left. The *Ninevehs* and *Babylons* of *Asia* are fallen; the *Sparta* and *Athens* of

of *Greece* are no more ; and the monuments that promised to endure to eternity are erased, like the mount of sand, which, yesterday the children cast up on the shore."

Yet it is but justice to observe, that *Eugenius* was careful to give to all in their several stations the regard and respect which they might justly claim. He paid a chearful submission to lawful authority. He abhorred the murmurings and complaints of discontented minds against those in power, when any step in the administration appears dubious to them. *Eugenius* had modesty enough to be tender in judging of things above him. It was a pleasure to him to render to all their dues ; custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

I cannot prevail with myself to conclude this sketch of his character without giving a hint at his candour in judging of others. He knew it was no act of charity to strengthen the profane in their vices, by flattering them, or leaving them to flatter themselves that they shall have peace, though they walk in the way of their own heart. He knew that this would but be joining issue with Satan, and lending him aid to ruin their souls for ever. He was deeply sensible, that because of drunkenness, whoredom, fraud, lying, covetousness, and the like offences, the
wrath

wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

But at the same time he knew that a considerable part of the conduct of men is of a doubtful cast. And here *Eugenius* would exercise his candour, by thinking, judging, and hoping the best. The commission of a single offence, contrary to the general course of a person's life, he could not admit as a proof of that person's insincerity. He knew that the best of men, even those on whom God has put the highest honour in his word, did not always persevere in an uniform course of obedience, without falls and blemishes. He likewise considered himself, as weak and liable to temptation.

He was not suspicious of bad designs in any, unless he had the clearest grounds to go upon. The words of Jesus were often repeated by him, and no doubt had great weight with him, to dispose his mind to candour and charity: "Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

This amiable man was at length visited by a heavy and long continued affliction, the forerunner of his great change. He patiently and quietly submitted to his heavenly Father's will,
and

and bore the awful trial with resignation and fortitude. His flesh upon him, and the multitude of his bones were in pain, and his soul mourned within him; yet, his passions were calm. He took kindly all the relief that his friends attempted to afford him. He gave them no uneasiness but what they felt through the force of sympathy and compassion. His carriage in the midst of his calamities, was so full of meekness, tenderness and love, that the hearts of his friends were still more firmly united to him, as the season approached when he must be taken from them.

That which alleviated his affliction, and afforded him rational tranquillity in the prospect of his dissolution, was the gospel of him in whose hands are life and death, and the assurance of another and better state, in which all tears will be wiped away, and the whole soul filled with ineffable joy. Supported by these hopes and prospects, the latter end of this amiable man was peace. The peace of God which passeth all understanding possessed his mind, and disarmed the king of terrors. Philosophy may infuse stubbornness, but religion only can give divine tranquillity in a dying hour. The precepts of *Epicurus*, who teaches us to endure what the laws of the universe make necessary, may silence, but cannot support us in that important hour.

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That precious gospel in which life and immortality are brought to light, was the sovereign consolation of *Eugenius* to the last moment of his existence. When his heart and his flesh failed, he knew that God was the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever.

His last words to his friends were, "Behold I die ; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

C H A P. VIII.

Some Rules for the suppression of sinful Anger.

1. **L**ET us study the importance of domestic happiness and tranquillity. Husbands should not be bitter against their wives, parents should not provoke their children to anger, masters must forbear threatening. The intemperate passion of superiors is often veiled under the excuse of necessary strictness, and maintaining of authority. But we should not ruin domestic peace by being always chiding. Every little default should not put us into a flame. We should not be easily provoked. Small offences should be passed by ; and when such are committed as
call

call for reproof, it should be given without heat and fury. Fiery and hasty carriage, scurrilous and indecent language, will at once sink our character, lessen our authority, and wound our family peace. Noise and clamour will render us contemptible and ridiculous, and convince our domestics, that we are so far from being fit to govern others, that we are unable to govern ourselves.

A due expression of displeasure against what is wrong, and such as is necessary to the reformation of the offender, will very well comport with the meekness of wisdom. Awful gravity and composedness, tempered with mildness and good will, would preserve our authority, and command that respect which we wish to secure, more than noise, bluster, and wrathful chiding. We were once inferiors ourselves, and should treat those who are now under us, as we then wished to be treated. The happy medium between *Eli's* indulgence, and *Nabal's* brutal churlishness, should be studied by us, if we would preserve peace and good order in our dwellings. Of the latter it is said, *He was such a churl, such a son of Belial, that a man could not speak to him.* Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man rather than such a fury. There is no peace where he comes.

Inferiors in families should be mild, gentle, teachable and submissive; not answering again; not sullen or froward; nor giving way to unjust and unreasonable murmurings, or complaints without cause. Equals should study to please, and endeavour to oblige one another, for mutual advantage. For *behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the dew of Hermon, which descended on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing.*

There is not, perhaps, a more mischievous source of anger and resentment in families than the fond partiality of parents to their children. Of all the infirmities, says Dr. Hunter, to which our nature is subject, none is more common, none is more unreasonable, unwise and unjust, none more fatal in its consequences to ourselves and others, than that of making a difference between one child and another. It discourages him or her who is slighted, and it frequently ruins the favourite. It sows the seeds of jealousy, anger, discord and malice, which frequently produce innumerable mischiefs in families, which embitter the lives of both parents and children. It sets the father against the mother, and the mother against the father; the sister against the brother, and the brother against the sister. Parents

rents ought to examine, and to watch over themselves carefully on this head. If they are unable to suppress the feelings of their own hearts, the expression thereof at least is in their power. And both policy and justice demand of them an equal distribution of their affection, their countenance, and their possessions. If there be a folly, which more certainly than another, punishes itself, it is this ill-judged distinction of which we are speaking.

Some of the best and wisest of men have erred in this particular. In the patriarchal age, we find both *Isaac* and *Jacob* caught in the same snare. *Isaac* loved *Esau*, because he did eat of his venison; and *Rebekah* loved *Jacob*. This disturbed the repose of *Isaac's* family. It was not long before the effect of parental partialities appeared. A competition, for precedency, and the rights of primogeniture, engaged the attention of the two brothers, and inflamed their minds against each other, from their earliest years. The claims of each were supported respectively by the parents, according to favour, and the family was torn and distracted with internal dissension.

The trifling circumstances of personal likeness, of beauty, and the like, which in themselves have neither merit nor demerit, have been

known to establish distinctions in families, which have been destructive of peace, and promotive of ruin. It is difficult indeed to bear an even hand between one child and another, and to prevent jealousies and animosities; but the difficulty makes it more necessary to be prudent and circumspect.

How shocking it is to live a life of tumult and contention in our own families, to have perpetual disquietudes in our own houses, where above all other places we should be concerned to maintain peace! If a man has not peace at home, where can he expect it? Neither sacred nor civil concerns go on well amidst strife and contention. Our prayers will be hindered, our converse and mutual edification prevented, our convivial repasts embittered, our rest discomposed, and our comforts destroyed. Let us study to be quiet, let us be of one mind, let us live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with us. His blessing which maketh rich shall rest upon us. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Some are complaisant, gentle and good-humoured among strangers, but morose and ill-natured at home. This is hypocrisy. It shews how little they are concerned for the comfort of their families, and that the fear of man hath a
greater

greater restraint over their passions than the fear of God.

Great prudence and patience are often called for in relative life. *Socrates* had his *Xantippe*, *Abigail* her churlish *Nabal*, *Job* a wife who tempted him to curse God, *Moses* a *Zipporah*, averse to duty, and *David* a scoffing *Michal*.

2. When we have given just offence to any one, we should be ready to acknowledge it. When we have committed an error, our pride prompts us to vindicate it, and to stand it out. We fancy our honour is concerned. But penitence and humble submission, would, in such a case, be a thousand times more to our credit. Yielding pacifieth great offences. Most men are sensibly touched with the ambition of credit and reputation, yet few consider properly either wherein these lie, or what is the right way of obtaining them. Meekness and gentleness in the point of true honour have the preference to resentment and obstinacy, both in the sight of God and men. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. More honour is due to him than to an *Alexander*, or a *Cæsar*. A rational victory is more honourable than a brutal one. To govern an enemy within us is more glorious than to kill an enemy without us. The

former is certainly more difficult than the latter. To quiet intestine broils, to still an insurrection of passions in our own bosoms, is a harder and a nobler effort than to trample on an outward opposer.

3. Let us ever remember, that passion has a direct tendency to trouble the understanding and darken the mind. The fumes which arise from a heart boiling with anger, becloud reason. Nothing is in reality what it appears to be in that unhappy moment. Perhaps no two persons can differ more from each other, than the same man differs from himself, when heated with anger, and when calm and composed. If wrath bear rule, our judgment of the case before us can neither be sound nor true. The consideration of this should excite us to be continually on our guard.

There cannot be a greater proof of the tendency of passion to blind the mind, than the disposition an angry man generally discovers to justify his extravagance. "I do well to be angry," is the language of most when their minds are heated. Certainly *Jonah* could not think so, when his mind was cool, and when he poured out his soul in humble supplication to God.

There is nothing said or done in anger but it may be better said, and better done when the storm is over.

4. Let

4. Let us consider that anger indulged may do us more mischief than he that offends us. He that can endure to have his bosom torn, and his peace of mind destroyed by this passion, might with much more ease overcome an injury, and possess his tranquillity of mind. It is a thousand times better to suffer two injuries than to revenge one. If any man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. To preserve our spirits calm, easy and innocent amidst injuries and insults, is honourable to ourselves, to God and his cause.

An angry man, to justify his own resentment, magnifies a slight offence, and sets it forth with every possible circumstance of aggravation. It is much the wiser part to extenuate and qualify the provocation. To suppose that it was an oversight, that there is no harm done, or at most, that there was none intended.

When the disciples of Jesus slept in the garden while their divine Master was in his agony, he gently rebuked them, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" and yet he kindly made this allowance for the infirmity of nature; "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

5. Let us consider the circumstances of the person who has offended us. Is he a child? His youth

youth will plead in his defence. Is he an aged person? Allowance must be made for his years and infirmities. Is he poor? His poverty should move our compassion. Is he rich? His wealth lays him under a temptation to forget himself. Is he a wise man? Let respect for his abilities soften our resentment. Is he a weak and foolish man? He knows no better. Is he a wicked man? We need not wonder at his ill-treatment of us; it is his general character. He fears not to offend God, and why should we think it strange that he offends us? Is he a good man? It is pity to harbour resentment against a worthy character.

To contend with our equals is dubious, with our superiors, is madness, with our inferiors, is meanness. When *Pisistratus* was reviled by a drunkard inflamed with wine, his attendants urged him to revenge the insult. But the chief replied, that he was no more moved with his reproaches than he should have been with a blind man who had happened to run against him without design.

6. Let us keep in memory our own errors and follies. We resent the miscarriages of others, because we forget our own. When I am informed that a man hath spoke evil of me, let me recollect whether I have not given him

just.

just occasion so to do. If another treats me with disrespect, before I kindle into resentment, let me remember how I have treated others.

Clemency and kindness may melt the heart of an enemy, and transform him into a friend. And a ready forgiveness of an offence committed by an intimate friend, will strengthen the ties of his friendship towards us.

When any one offends us, it may be proper to reflect, that we ourselves either have done, or might have done the like. We use long forbearance towards ourselves, we are always ready to excuse ourselves. Let us learn to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. We have been guilty of a thousand miscarriages towards those with whom we have to do. We wish them to bear with our infirmities; let us remember that divine rule; *As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.* Surely we should not be so hot in resenting the faults of others, since we have so many of our own.

7. Neither is it enough for us to bear in mind our offences directly committed against our fellow-creatures; we should also remember, and be deeply humbled for our sins against God. A deep sense of sin, and inward shame, are inseparable from a penitent frame of heart. A view
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of what passes in our own hearts, and of the miscarriages of our lives, tends greatly to subdue haughtiness of spirit, and consequently, makes it easy to pass by those provocations which set the proud and self-admiring all in a flame. The truly penitent are not readily moved to resentment, or kindled into passion, whatever is said of them, or done to them. A man truly humbled for his sin before God, will be ready to reflect, when a provocation to wrath is before him, "The heart-searching God knows all my foolishness, and that I am deserving of far worse treatment."

This inducement to suppress anger, the apostle *Paul* urges in all its force. He founds his exhortation to guard against every violation of the law of meekness, solely on the sinful state in which we are all by nature; *Put them in mind*, says he to *Titus*, *to be gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*

8. Let us every evening review the conduct of the past day, and see what progress we have made in meekness and patience. "When the candle is withdrawn," says the heathen moralist, "I review the day that is past, and ruminate on my

my words and actions. I hide nothing from myself; I let nothing escape me. In that dispute, I say to myself, I was too warm, I spoke rashly. I will hereafter be more cautious. I admonished a friend, but doing it with too much severity, I offended instead of reforming him." "I resented an injury," may the christian say, "but I did it with so much heat, that my own mind was thrown into tumult and disquietude, I exposed myself to shame, I wounded my own conscience, and acted unworthy my christian character and profession. The recollection confounds me. I pray God forgive me what is past, and grant me the meekness of wisdom, that I may demean myself more suitably for the future."

We should enquire what ground we have gained in the government of ourselves; what advancement we have made in meekness and patience. Seasons of self-examination, in which our past actions pass in review before us, to be condemned and rectified where they appear to have been wrong, are highly requisite to moral improvement.

9. If we would keep our resentment within due bounds, let us accustom it to know the reins. Self-government should be habitual. In vain shall we endeavour to obtain the conquest, if the attempt is only made when some violent provocation

cation has inflamed the mind. If it is not our aim at other seasons, and on less trying occasions, to rule our own spirits, it can hardly be expected that we shall succeed when some remarkable temptation presents itself.

When at any time we feel the risings of anger, we should do well to put that question to ourselves which was pronounced to *Gain*, "Why am I wroth? Is there any cause for it? If a slight provocation has been given me, why should I suffer my thoughts to dwell upon, and magnify it in my imagination, so as to nourish the resentment I feel rising in my bosom?"

We must deny ourselves early and inflexibly, if we would have the government of our own souls, and not be slaves to passion.

It is necessary for the health of our souls, at some seasons, to forbear to do what may innocently be done, that we may, through grace, be better able to resist the temptation when interest and other deluding inducements shall lend their charms to guilt.

Let us therefore live in the continual practice of self-denial, and not suffer ourselves to be humourous or hard to please in our meat, drink, clothes or attendance. Let us learn to subdue our fondness for those things which suit our humours, and our aversion to those we dislike;

otherwise

otherwise we shall meet with frequent occasions of resentment.

It is not enough to repress those passions which are directly criminal. Even innocent gratifications must be sometimes forborne. For he who complies with all his lawful desires on all occasions, will lose his empire over himself. That is an excellent rule which *Plutarch* gives for the preservation of meekness. "Be not curious in diet, clothes or attendance; for they who need but few things, are not liable to anger if they be disappointed of many."

10. Let us be clothed with humility. Pride, we have seen, is the parent and nurse of passion. The humble soul is meek and patient. What others call affronts and wrongs, give the humble man no pain or uneasiness. He knows that every other person has his own opinions, desires and inclinations as well as he; and he is not so weak as to think it reasonable for them to yield up their sentiments and will to his humour and gratification. He does not readily suppose his neighbour has a design to affront him. He is kind and candid, and takes every thing in the most favourable light. If injuries are done him, he does not immediately resent them, but takes pains with himself to forget by degrees what at first wounded his mind.

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Humility

Humility is an ornament which becomes fin-ners well. It should be put on with our daily raiment, and we should vie with each other which shall shew it in its greatest perfection.

As pride is the source and spring of wrathful passions, so to have this evil subdued, and to learn the practice of humility, is the only successful way to attain true meekness.

II. Let us ever be ready to forget and forgive injuries. The answer of *Cato* to him who had struck him in the bath, and came to acknowledge his offence, was worthy so great a man. "I do not remember it," said *Cato*. It is the part of a great mind, the glory of a man to pass over a transgression. A certain noble courtier being once asked, by what means he had continued so long in favour, replied, "By being thankful, and patiently enduring injuries." *Socrates* having, without any provocation, received a rude blow on his head by an insulting bravado, bore it with that patience which may put christians to the blush. Among us, such an affront would have been followed with a challenge, and, perhaps, issued in death. But *Socrates* kept his temper, and only made this calm and humorous remark on the insult he had received, "It is pity that a man cannot know when he ought to come abroad with a helmet on his head."

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We are commanded to *shew all meekness unto all men*. Bearing, forbearing, condescending and forgiving meekness. The meekness which will endear our friends, and reconcile our enemies. The law of love should be written on our hearts, and the *law of kindness* expressed by our lips. Meekness should not only be shewn to the *good and gentle, but also to the froward*.

A spirit of forgiveness is essential to christianity. And the consideration of God's forgiving us our great and manifold provocations, should induce us to a ready forgiveness of those who have injured us. *As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*, is the grand argument the gospel makes use of, to soften the rigour of our resentment to an offending brother, and dispose us to forgive him.

12. Let us consider of what importance it is for us to endeavour, by a kind, gentle and obliging behaviour, to conciliate the affection and esteem of those with whom we have to do. Our great Creator has formed us for society. He has made it natural to us to desire that our neighbours should wish our welfare, and treat us with decency, kindness and love; that they should promote our interest, and lend us assistance when we stand in need of their help. Consequently, he hath laid us under obligations to

treat them as we wish they should treat us. And the more meekness and gentleness we shew to them, the greater reason we have to expect the same returns of love and good-will from them.

When we fall under affliction, or are overtaken by distressful calamities, we need the sympathy, counsels, prayers, and other friendly aids of those in the society of whom Providence has placed us. But how can we expect any of these instances of kindness from them, if we have made them our enemies by our own morose and unfriendly carriage? If we have seemed to take pleasure in vexing them by our peevish or furious passions, what kindness can we expect from them?

Although the blessed God supremely regards his own glory, yet he is so far from requiring any kind of homage from us his creatures which is in the least detrimental to the interests of society, that it is impossible to please him without shewing kindness, love and good will to one another. No parent ever more affectionately sought the happiness of his offspring, or delighted more in their harmony, than our Father who is in heaven seeks our mutual welfare, and delights in seeing us obey the great command of loving our neighbour as ourselves. It is evidently his will,

will, that, as christians, we should stand as much distinguished by the amiableness of our deportment towards men, as by faith, devotion and zeal towards himself.

13. Let us remember that men can proceed no farther in their insults and injurious treatment of us, than divine wisdom permits them. The wicked are his sword. *Shimei* curses not without his permission. Men's affronts are God's chastisements; their reproaches are his rebukes. *Job* kept his eye more fixed on the permissive hand of God than on the instruments of his affliction, the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans*. Instead of venting his rage in fruitless exclamations at their cruelty and rapacity, he humbles himself and says, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*. He has wise and gracious purposes to answer in suffering men to treat us as they do. He means to humble and to prove us, that he may do us good in our latter end. *Ye thought evil against me, said Joseph to his brethren; but God meant it for good*.

14. Let us live under an habitual sense of the divine presence, and be in the fear of the Lord all the day long. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. "Thou God seest me," is a

proper and suitable reflection at all times, and especially in times of temptation and danger.

15. Let us learn to expect injuries and affronts, that we may not be surpris'd when they occur. We do not live among angels, nor among men free from perverseness, and unspotted with impurity. We dwell among a people of irregular tempers and unclean lips. If we would have no provocations we must needs go out of the world. In all connections and relations we may justly look for something displeasing. How can we expect to be perfectly at ease in this restless world? *Offences will come among those whose natures are depraved, and whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? If thou seest the violent perverting of judgment and justice, marvel not at the matter.* Be not surpris'd into disquietude and passion, when you meet with provocations from corrupt and fallen creatures. The briers and thorns are with us, we dwell among scorpions. We should *keep our mouth as with a bridle, while the wicked are before us*, and be cautious, as those who walk with a lighted candle among barrels of gunpowder.

There are savages in this wilderness through which we pass to the heavenly land, and we need not think it strange if we sometimes hear them

roar

roar against us. Meekness will teach us to pass on without resentment, and courage will embolden us to proceed without fear or dismay. If fiery tongues set on us, we should not be like tinder, ready to catch the flame, and render evil for evil.

The patriarch *Isaac* grew rich and great in the land of *Abimelech*; but the *Philistines* envied him. They were angry with him because God prospered him. The wells which his father's servants had digged, the *Philistines* stopped, and filled with earth. Resentment considers that as gained to itself which is lost to the object of it. It enjoys the mischief which it works merely for mischief's sake. *Isaac* prudently gives way, and pitches his tent in the valley of *Gerar*. But the unrelenting rage of the *Philistines* pursues him thither. No sooner has he by industry procured water for his family and flocks, than they endeavour, by violence, to possess themselves of it. *Isaac*, fond of peace, chuses rather to recede from his just right, than to support it by force; and still retires, seeking relief in patience and industry. He finds himself still pursued by the pride and perfidiousness of his neighbours; but at length he conquers by yielding. A victory the most honourable, and the most satisfactory. He went up from thence, and to remove, as far

as in him lay, every ground of quarrel, he fixed his residence at *Beer-sheba*; where feeling himself at home, he at once pitches his tent for repose, and builds an altar for devotion. Here, as one well observes, the hatred, resentment and violence of man, are lost and forgotten in communion with God.

His meek and placid behaviour, together with the smiles of Providence upon him, rendered the patriarch so respectable, that *Abimelech* felt himself impelled at length, to court his friendship, and to secure it by a solemn covenant. For when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.

16. Let us pour out our souls in humble supplication to that Almighty Being whose grace alone can effectually subdue our irregular tempers. To rectify them, without his aid, is absolutely beyond our power. His aid is graciously promised to those who seek it with humility and fervor. He will subdue our iniquities. Let us fly to his throne, confess and bewail our weakness and folly, and ask help of him who gives liberally to all men, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given us. Intercourse with God in its own nature, softens that hardness of heart, that moroseness of spirit which we are apt to contract from converse with a perplexing world. It humbles,

bles, it elevates and refines the soul. It makes us averse to give offence, and careful to cultivate harmony, and promote peace among our fellow-creatures. He that lives near to God will be unwilling to contend about trifles. He will be disposed to live peaceably with all men. He will be, in a great measure, exempted from that continual irritation which imaginary injuries raise in suspicious minds. And that God who knows the frailties of the human heart, and hears the prayer of the humble, works in him that which is well-pleasing in his sight.

If any man lack the meekness of wisdom, let him ask it of God. Sudden ejaculations to God when provocations occur, are of special service to cool and calm the mind, and prevent the out-breakings of anger to our fellow-creatures. When *David's* heart was hot within him, and the fire burned in his bosom, the first words he uttered were those of fervent prayer. *Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days!*

17. Let us cherish good humour and christian cheerfulness. Let us endeavour to shake off that sullenness which makes us so uneasy to ourselves and to all who are near us. *Pythagoras* quelled the perturbations of his mind by the use of his harp; and *David's* music calmed the distraction of *Saul*, and banished the evil-spirit from him.

Anger,

Anger, fretfulness and peevishness prey upon the tender fibres of our frame, and injure our health. Why should we delight to punish ourselves because some one has done us an injury, or is supposed to have treated us unbecomingly?

The man who is of a sour, morose, malevolent temper, looks only on the defects and imperfections of his neighbours. He is ignorant of the art of combining their weaknesses with their virtues, and of rendering the imperfections of others supportable, by a just and humiliating reflection on his own. Such a one exclaims against society, because due attention is not paid to his capricious humour. He tells you, there is very little in human society that is desirable. We own this is too true. It would, however, be incomparably less desirable, if all men were of this sour and unkind disposition. A society composed of persons of such a cast, would bear a striking resemblance to the infernal regions.

18. Let us avoid the company of passionate and furious men. We learn the manners and drink into the spirit of those with whom we are conversant. Like theameleon, we take a tincture from that which is near us. The wise man's advice is therefore salutary: *Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways,*
and

and get a snare to thy soul. Familiarity with drunkards endangers our sobriety; with the lascivious, our chastity; with the proud, our humility; and with the angry, our meekness and gentleness.

Let the meek and lowly be our chosen companions. The wolf is no fit companion for the lamb, nor the leopard for the kid. Let the quiet of the land be the men of our council, that we may observe in them the excellency of meekness, learn their ways, and copy after their example. We shall find from them that none live so happy as those who have the government of their passions; that none are so amiable as those who have the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit. The peevish and feeble pieces of human nature take offence at trifles, and often make their own jealousies a sufficient ground for their indignation. Let us withdraw from them.

19. Let us labour to have our hearts continually affected with a sense of the love and kindness of God towards us. If we are christians indeed, we should often be saying within ourselves, *What manner of love hath the Father bestowed on us!* How great, how free, how undeserved! He gave his Son to be a sacrifice for our offences, that we might be reconciled to him, and shall we be unwilling to be reconciled to an offending

offending brother? He pardons our blackest crimes, our numerous and enormous transgressions, and shall we be full of anger and resentment against a brother for some petty offence? And an offence too, of one with whom we hope to dwell in the regions of peace and felicity for ever? He tells us, if we forgive not such a brother, he will not forgive us; and can we still be implacable? He gives us the spirit of peace and love to dwell in our hearts, and shall we be deaf to his benign injunctions? *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* The love of Christ is the sweetest and happiest constraint we can possibly be under, the kindest and most efficacious incentive to love and good works.

Dr. Cheyne, who has done honour to his profession as a physician, has observed, that love of God, as it is the sovereign remedy of all miseries, so, in particular, it prevents the bodily disorders which the passions introduce, by keeping the passions themselves within due bounds. And by the unspeakable joy, and perfect calm, serenity

serenity and tranquillity it gives the mind, becomes the most powerful of all the means of health and long life. The object of this love is infinitely perfect. If we are properly affected with his love, so as to be engaged to love him in a supreme degree, anger, hatred and malice will be suppressed. Love is the noblest, and most joyful affection of the mind. Our joy and happiness will always rise in proportion to our love to him in whose presence is fulness of joy. The placing our supreme love on him, and preferring his favour above all, will render us serene, calm and pleased; and as such, most effectually subdue our angry passions.

Let us be firmly persuaded then that the enjoyment of inward tranquillity and a sense of the divine favour, form the chief happiness of our rational nature. It is for want of adverting to this, that our passions are thrown into tumult by outward occurrences. Where we expect too much, we are sure to meet with disappointment; and disappointment involves us in vexation.

All immoderate attachments to creatures are to be considered and avoided as acts of idolatry. But a small degree of regard should be entertained for those objects, which, at most, can afford us but a momentary felicity.

N

Love

Love to God is the foundation of all holiness. He is supremely lovely, and should be supremely loved by us. His favour is life, and ought to be preferred to every other enjoyment. Our hearts should adopt the language of the pious psalmist, *It is good for me to draw near to God: whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* Then will our bosoms glow with the lambent flames of mild benevolence. Our souls will be absorbed in tender sympathy with the distressed. We shall feel a brother's woe, and hasten to his relief. We shall bear with his infirmities, and cover them with the mantle of charity.

The pleasure which affects a human mind with the most lively and transporting touches, and which has the happiest influence over all his passions, is what arises from the favour of the Most High, and the prospect of being crowned at length with a happiness large as our desires, and lasting as our immortal souls. This is a perpetual spring of cheerfulness and gladness in the mind. It softens the asperities of our tempers, and clothes us with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. It lessens the calamities, and doubles the joys of life. Without this, the highest state of worldly advancement is but vanity and vexation, and with it, the lowest condition is a paradise. Where

Where this happy state of mind prevails, the rest of the soul is undisturbed, its comforts are not plundered, its government is not disordered, the laws of reason and religion bear the sway, and communion with God and his saints is enjoyed.

In such a man, there is the joint concurrence of all the affections to the peace and quiet of the soul, every one exerting itself in its own order for the good of the whole. *The kingdom of God there prevails, which is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

20. Let us set before us, and as much as possible, keep in sight, the shortness of human life, and the certain approach of death, judgment, and the eternal world. What avails this turmoil of passion, this hurry of spirits about things which will presently come to an end? If eternity lies open to view, with all its awful concerns, what can appear so considerable in present occurrences, as to agitate our passions, and discompose our minds? Shall we, instead of preparing for a higher existence, absurdly waste the few moments allotted us here, in contending about trifles? Eternity, eternity is at hand.

Let us not add to the troubles of the present hour, the mischiefs and miseries of strife and contention. Let us study to smoothe the rugged path by meekness and gentleness, as much as in us lies, living peaceably with all men. Let us study to be quiet, and finish what remains of life, in peace and love.

When we are disposed to be angry with a fellow-creature, let us remember, that we know not but he and ourselves too may be summoned to appear before the judgment seat of Christ within the present hour. This night our souls may be required of us. Were we sure that this would be the case, our angry spirits would be cooled, and other concerns would engage our thoughts. And since every moment's existence here is uncertain to us, why should we cherish any disposition which is unsuitable for a dying man? Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

21. Let us keep in view the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was the design of God to set his son before us as the model of christian virtue. I am far from asserting that this was the only, or the chief errand on which he was sent into our world. Jesus himself tells us, that he came to give his life a ransom for many, to seek and to save that which was lost, and to lay down his life for the sheep. But a subordinate end of his

his mission was, to give a living representation of those dispositions, graces and virtues for our imitation, which are pleasing to God, profitable to us, ornamental to our character, and edifying to those with whom we have to do.

We are directed to imitate inferior examples so far as they are good. A cloud of witnesses is set before us, to animate us in the christian race. We are to be followers of them who through faith and patience do now inherit the promises. God has not only shewn us our duty in his laws and commands, but he has made known his will to us in the more striking, the more engaging way of living examples.

The life of Jesus is particularly designed for our imitation. We have a fair transcript of the law in his amiable temper and conduct. A minute account is given us of his whole behaviour by the four evangelists, that in the mouth of so many witnesses, every word might be established. His chearful obedience to his divine Father, and regard for his glory, his zeal against sin, his love to mankind, his patience, his meekness and lowliness of heart, shone with such splendor as may justly engage us at once to learn and love the way of holiness.

Our Lord himself took care to lead his disciples to consider him as their pattern. He tells them

that he who would claim relation to him, or interest in him, must follow him; that they who would find rest in him, must learn of him; and that they must love one another as he has loved them. "I have given you an example," says he, "that ye should do as I have done to you." Hence, our abiding in him is to be proved by our walking as he walked.

We readily and naturally imbibe the spirit of an intimate friend, and run into a similitude of mind and manners with him. We say of Jesus, "This is my Friend," and he vouchsafes to call us his friends. A relation so intimate and endearing should engage us to follow his example.

We profess to be his disciples; we call him Master and Lord; and as such, it is highly reasonable that we should imitate him. The several sects of philosophers among the heathens, were influenced by the practice of their leaders and founders, as well as by their precepts. They were censured or applauded as they degenerated from the virtues of their masters, or copied after them. *Ye call me Master and Lord, says our gracious Redeemer, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.* His doctrine and practice
were

were in perfect unison, we should therefore regard him and follow him in both.

We hope to be like him hereafter. He is the model of our final happiness. If we are now in reality the sons of God, the heirs of promise, we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. If we take delight in the prospect of future conformity to him, we certainly should be aspiring after it now. We should be pressing towards the mark. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. In vain do we flatter ourselves with the hope of being with Jesus hereafter, if we are not like him here. Let us study his example, as it is drawn in the gospel history, with care and attention. No part of scripture is more proper for our search and meditation, than that which gives us the picture of the temper and life of our divine Saviour. Let us never allow ourselves to rest contented without a real and growing conformity to him. The more we contemplate his lovely example, the more we shall be charmed with it. And while we stedfastly behold in the glass of the gospel, the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the agency and operation of the Spirit of the Lord. Our rough, morose and angry dispositions shall be subdued,

subdued, and we shall be more and more assimilated to the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

The divine Redeemer always preferred truth, and obedience to his Father, to the pleasing of men. Yet as far as was consistent with his Father's will, he constantly shewed a strong disposition to prevent angry contentions. Instead of offering injury to any, he went about doing good to all. It was foretold of him in prophecy, that he should not strive nor cry, neither should any man hear his voice in the streets. He acted correspondent to this prediction, pursuing the great design upon which he came into the world, without noise or contention, disturbance or tumult. He checked the first appearances of strife among his followers. He paid tribute to the exactors of it, though it was not due from him. This he chose to do, as himself declares, *lest they should be offended*. When he had miraculously cured a leper, rather than displease the Jewish priests, he ordered the man whom he had healed, to go and carry the gift to them, which God had ordained to be given to the priests, when they were concerned in the cure of the leprosy.

But I forbear to enlarge, and shall close this essay with a few brief remarks.

C H A P. IX.

1. **W**E see from what has been said on this subject, sufficient evidence of human depravity. The history of mankind is in every page demonstrative of our original apostacy. Whence is it that men are agitated with such lawless passions as set them at continual war with each other? Whence is it, that not content with the evils which nature has entailed upon them, they exert all their talents for multiplying and speeding the means of perdition to one another? Whence is it that we see half the world employed in pushing the other half from the verge of existence? Whence is it that even in their religious contests, such wrathful and malevolent passions reign among men as are disgraceful to humanity? The cause of all this disorder is, alas! but too evident, *we are by nature children of wrath.* We are naturally the subjects of enmity to God and his law. This is evident from the confessions and complaints of those

those who have the justest and truest acquaintance with their own hearts. The sacred scriptures abound with the groans and cries of those who have felt themselves infected with the loathsome disease. *Behold I am vile, says holy Job. Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, says David, the man after God's own heart, but behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Nay, it is the acknowledgment of holy men in general. *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?*

This depravity is total and entire, diffusing itself through all the powers of the soul. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. It is universal; involving all nations, both *Jews and Gentiles*—all ranks; the high and the low, the rich and the poor. Whatever difference there may be as to birth or blood, nobility or baseness, education, place or office; *all flesh have corrupted their way.* What nation, what tribe, what kindred, what family, what people or language can be produced, before or after the flood, under the law, or under the gospel, who have escaped the direful infection? Happy were the man who could make the pleasing discovery.

This

This disease is likewise constant. Blindness in the understanding, impotence in the will, disorder in the affections, are not visitants, but inhabitants. They are interwoven in our very constitution.

And this fatal distemper is more deeply rooted than the *Ethiopian's* sooty complexion, or the leopard's spots. Hence no ordinary means will take effect for the removal of it. The most awakening threats, and thundering menaces, will not rouse us from our lethargy. The heart is stony, the neck an iron sinew, the brow brass. The most pathetic entreaties, and moving expostulations cannot entice the mind, to close in with that which is absolutely necessary, to its own solid peace and final happiness. Divine power alone can make the sinner willing.

2. Our natural depravity strongly bespeaks the necessity of our renewal by grace. We must have a new and a better life than that we drew with our first birth. The stream will not rise higher than the fountain; nature can produce no more than that which is natural. If in our first birth we are children of wrath, what but a being born from above can make us the children of God? I know this remark will be deemed by some, the cant of enthusiasm. But should the fear of incurring such a censure impose silence upon

upon me, I should think myself unworthy of the christian name, and much more unworthy to sustain the sacred character of a minister of that Jesus, who has taught us all, that except a man be born again, he cannot see, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Unless a new heart be given to us, and a new spirit put within us, we shall ever be strangers to true christian meekness. The apostle of the *Gentiles* carefully informs us that meekness is *a fruit of the Spirit*. The pruning of the branches is not sufficient; the tree itself must be made good. An outward reformation is not enough; we must be *renewed in the spirit of our minds*. *Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature*. Grapes will not grow upon thorns, nor figs upon thistles. *The ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit, which are in the sight of God of great price, are only found in him who is created in Christ Jesus unto good work*.

To deliver us from the guilt, pollution and misery of our lapsed state, was the end of our blessed Redeemer's coming into this world. *He gave himself for our sins*; he submitted to a state of poverty and meanness, to reproach and shame, to incessant labour and toil; he yielded and delivered himself up, as a willing victim, into the hands of avenging justice, and was stricken,
smitten

smitten of God and afflicted, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; he was exceeding sorrowful, sore amazed, and very heavy; his heart melted like wax in the midst of his bowels; he was in an agony, and sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground; he gave himself up into the hands of cruel and wicked men, and underwent the bitter pains and horrors of an accursed death; and all this, that he might make reconciliation for our iniquity, satisfy for our offences, and procure the full remission of them all. *Without shedding of blood there was no remission; but we have redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of grace.*

With his stripes we are healed, says the evangelical prophet. He did not die for our sins that we should live in them, and under the power of them; but that he might free us from their tyranny, and release us from their captivity; that henceforth we should not serve sin. He was *manifested that he might destroy in us the works of the devil*, reduce us to subjection to himself, reign in our hearts by his spirit and grace, maintaining his throne there in righteousness, peace, and joy. On this subject, reader, may your thoughts delightfully expand. Here is the remedy for all the evils which sin has introduced. Here is the de-

struction of sin itself, the cause, the direful, the fatal cause of all our woe. Here is the sovereign cure for all the disorders of your mind. Here is the precious balm for a wounded conscience.— This, this is all our salvation, and should be all our desire.

Blessed Jesus ! may we look to thee and be healed of all our maladies ! We who have been *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another* ; may we, as the happy consequence of thy atoning sacrifice, be saved *by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost* ! Thus shall our angry passions, on account of which we are compared to lions and tigers, wolves and bears, be all brought into subjection and obedience to thee ! The lion shall become a lamb, the churl shall become liberal, and the fierce and furious be clothed with gentleness. Conquer, by the omnipotence of thy grace, our perverse affections, and reign in us, that we may conquer and reign with thee. Let our rebellious powers hear thy voice, tremble and obey !

How astonishing is it that the wonders of saving love should so little engage the attention of mankind. The salvation of a lost world has employed the thoughts and counsels of Jehovah
from

from everlasting. At how many times, in how many different manners, did He speak of this subject unto the fathers? How many embassies of angels did He send to give intimations of it? How were all the designs of the Most High in the course of his adorable Providence, and the execution of them, rendered subservient to this one glorious purpose, which rises superior to, and absorbs all the rest, the plan of salvation by a Redeemer! As if the great God had been carrying on no design from the beginning, but one, a design of love to ruined men. That one, which of all others, these ungrateful creatures treat with the greatest slight, indifference and neglect. And shall that which thus occupied the Eternal Mind; to mature and execute which the world was created; which has been declared to man by so many signs in heaven above, and on earth beneath, by the tongues of so many prophets, by so many oracles; to announce which angels and archangels have descended from their thrones; and to accomplish which, *God was made manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, preached unto the Gentiles, received up into glory—* shall it be announced, unfolded, executed in vain? Shall men make light of it all, and treat it as a cunningly devised fable? Shall they still regard it as a thing of nought? Reader, what-

ever you approve or reject in these pages, neglect not this great salvation. But renouncing your sins, and embracing the messages of life and peace, enter cordially into the views of God your Maker and Redeemer, and earnestly pursue the same object with him, the salvation of the soul !

Should you be disposed to say, What connexion has this with your subject? I answer, a very intimate connexion. Were I to trace out the disease, without once hinting at the remedy, I should acquit myself but poorly in this business. Like a surgeon who probes a wound, but leaves it open and bleeding, without the necessary dressings. *The whole, indeed, need not a physician, but they that are sick.* Here then,

———— Survey the wond'rous cure ;

And at each step, let higher wonder rise !
 Pardon for infinite offence ! and pardon
 Thro' means, that speak its value infinite !
 A pardon bought with blood ! with blood divine !
 With blood divine of him I made my foe !
 Persisted to provoke ! tho' woo'd and aw'd,
 Bless'd, and chastis'd, a flagrant rebel still !
 A rebel 'midst the thunders of his throne !
 Nor I alone, a rebel universe !
 My species up in arms ! not one exempt !
 Yet for the foulest of the foul, he dies !
 Most joy'd for the redeem'd from deepest guilt !
 As if our race were held of highest rank !
 And Godhead dearer as more kind to man !

YOUNG

3. What shall we think of those mighty heroes who have been so unjustly celebrated in every age for their prowess and valour? Were not many of them the oppressors and butchers of mankind? and yet poets, painters, sculptors, statuaries and historians have united their efforts to make them famous. *Themistocles* spoke the language of sober reason, when, being asked whom he considered as the greatest of heroes, he answered, "Not him who conquers, but him who saves; not the man who ruins, but the man who erects; who of a village can make a city, or turn a despicable people into a great nation." Yet the serene acts of benevolence, the small still voice of goodness, are neither accompanied by noise nor ostentation. It is uproar and tumult, the downfall of sacked cities, the shrieks of ravished matrons, and the groans of dying nations, that fill the trumpet of fame, and gain the plaudit of the world.

Men of cruelty and blood, of ambition and power, find distinction and glory very easy to be attained in this way: as it is indisputably more easy to destroy than to create, to give death than to give life, to pull down than to build up, to bring devastation and misery, rather than plenty, peace and prosperity upon earth. But let us

not ascribe honour and acclamation to deeds which call loudly for infamy and the gibbet.

Henry the Fourth of *France*, just before a battle, in which he obtained an entire victory, devoutly poured out his soul in prayer to the God of Armies, to the following purpose :

“ O Lord of Hosts, who canst see through the thickest veil and closest disguise, who viewest the bottom of my heart, and the deepest designs of my enemies ; who hast in thy hands, as well as before thine eyes, all the events which concern human life ; if thou knowest that my reign will promote thy glory and the safety of thy people ; if thou knowest that I have no other ambition in my soul, but to advance the honour of thy holy name, and the good of this state ; favour, O great God, the justice of my arms, and reduce all the rebels to acknowledge him whom thy sacred decrees, and the order of a lawful succession, have made their sovereign ; but if thy good Providence has ordered it otherwise, and thou seest that I should prove one of those kings whom thou givest in thine anger, take from me, O merciful God, my life and my crown ; make me this day a sacrifice to thy will ; let my death end the calamities of *France* ; and let my blood be the last that is spilt in this quarrel.”

4. Whatever

4. Whatever be our different conceptions as to matters of speculation, let us be very assiduous to cultivate a christian temper. Let us be careful to give evidence of a ready and hearty submission to the word of God, and a chearful resignation to his Providence. Let us be modest, humble and lowly in our behaviour towards men, cautious of giving offence, and not hasty to take offence at others. Let us learn to be calm under real provocations, and always in readiness to be reconciled when the offence is acknowledged. In all our religious connections and concerns especially, let us wear the garment of humility, and the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit. This will be more to the honour of our Divine Saviour, more to the credit of our holy religion, than the exactest orthodoxy in doubtful matters without it.

We may err in lesser concerns, and yet be safe as to our final state; but if we are destitute, wholly destitute of a true christian temper, *the mind that was in Christ Jesus*, we are in the *gall of bitterness, in the bond of iniquity*. It matters not by what name we chuse to be distinguished, or to what sect of christians we professedly adhere; if pride, anger, wrath and malice reign in our hearts and govern our lives, all our religion is hypocrisy. *If any man seem to be religious, and*
bridleth

bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, betrays the perverseness and malignity of his disposition, *that man's religion is vain.* Let no man deceive himself.

5. What care is necessary that the tempers of children be not spoiled by an improper education ! The severity of a tyrannical parent or master may be productive of much mischief to his tender charge. After having devoted many years of life to the important task of cultivating youthful minds, I hope I may be allowed to speak what I have learned by experience. Youths of a generous disposition may be induced to do any thing by kindness, but severity would rouse and harden them into opposition. To be perpetually chiding them, or frequently beating or scourging them, would have a natural tendency to stir up their resentment against us, and lead them to consider us as their greatest enemies.

The infliction of chastisement requires great prudence, and a happy command of temper. That it may produce the desired effect, it should at least appear to flow from a just displeasure at the offence committed. But for a parent or tutor not to be able to command his passion, would be to set a bad example before children. It would lessen his authority, by shewing his weakness before them ; for it is great weakness in an instructor

instructor to be often carried away by the impulse of anger. Few persons meet with more frequent provocations than those who have a number of children to manage and govern. If such do not check the risings of anger, they will find it grow upon them, and become habitual. This would make their own lives very unhappy, and lead them to sudden acts of cruelty and barbarity, which they might immediately repent of, but in vain.

Slight expressions of displeasure or approbation, will produce happy effects on youths of a meek and tender disposition. A frowning look or a sharp word will succeed better with such, as a corrective, than many stripes with others. Praise and shame will frequently be found sufficient to answer the governor's purpose. But vice and immorality, idleness and mischief will, at times, require the rod of correction. It would be awful to suffer children to walk in the way of their own heart. The fertile soil must not lie uncultivated, and over-run with weeds.

As severity is ever to be condemned, so an excess of lenity is not less pernicious. It is an ancient observation, and which has received the sanction of experience in every age, *He that spareth his rod, i. e. when absolutely necessary, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him*

him betimes. When lenity and softness are ill-judged and excessive, they are in effect cruelty. "Impunity," says *Cicero*, "is the greatest enticement to the commission of offences." A wiser than he has told us, that *a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.*

I lately heard of a certain youth, of a hot, malignant, fiery disposition, much addicted to quarreling with his companions when at school, and who being always accustomed to be treated with indulgence, grew up to such a degree of self-willedness, that on meeting with some opposition from his parent, in an affair he had in hand when grown up to years of maturity, he could not bear to be controlled, but took a loaded pistol, and shot himself dead.

Experience shews that the tempers of children may be spoiled, either by an excess of lenity, or of severity. The golden mean between the two extremes is the safest path. Severity may break the spirits. *Provoke not children to anger, lest they be discouraged.* Lenity on the other hand is amiable; the motives to it are noble; much may be said in its praise; and the advocate for it will find an attentive audience. Yet lenity carried to an undue degree, frequently involves the object of it in misery and perdition. Human nature is, at every stage of life, prone to evil;
and

and particularly so at a time, when, to inherent depravity are added, weakness of understanding, and want of thought and experience. Proper methods must be devised of influencing the hopes and fears of children; and these methods must be accommodated to their different dispositions. Wisdom is profitable to direct.

6. Let aged persons be particularly on their guard against angry, fretful, and perverse passions. The many disappointments we have met with through life, the coldness and neglect with which we begin to be treated, together with the load of infirmities incident to those who are advanced in years, have a tendency to sour our tempers, and make us uneasy to ourselves, and to those about us. Our old friends are many of them gone down to the grave before us; and those who survive, perhaps, have almost forgotten us. Some of our children are taken away by death, others removed to a distance from us, or, which is still more afflictive, there may be others of them who prove ungrateful and disobedient. In such circumstances we stand in need of great grace to enable us to possess our souls in patience, and to keep us serene, gentle and composed. We are apt to be too soon thrown out of humour, to assume an angry look, and to utter the language of perverseness.

But

But let us remember, that we stand in need of help and assistance. We should therefore, for our own sakes, avoid every thing that would disgust and drive away our friends, from whom we may still hope for some comfort. Let us especially watch against a positive, supercilious, overbearing temper ; a fretful, uneasy, discontented spirit. Let us not be always complaining of slights and neglects. Let us not be continually finding fault with those in younger life ; for these are the persons chiefly from whom we may expect consolation. And it must be a very extraordinary degree of piety, or good nature, that will incline persons to help those who are always uneasy, cross, peevish and perverse. If we drive away those who could help us, and would do it with pleasure, if we were meek, patient and obliging, we may stretch out our hands in vain, and hope for friendly assistance and sympathy without success. Nay, we may thank ourselves for it, if we are deserted, overlooked and neglected still more and more, and if the world appear desirous to be rid of us.

But nobler motives than these should excite us to meekness and patience. The hopes, prospects and comforts of christianity should calm our spirits, and sooth our hearts to rest. All true christians know, that the gospel and the religion
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of Jesus afford a rich profusion of solid peace, and consolation, amidst the sorrows, disappointments and afflictions attendant on our pilgrimage-state. Instead of repining at any humiliating circumstances that may be allotted to us in our declining years, let us, my aged and honoured friends, *draw water out of the wells of salvation. By patience and comfort of the scriptures*, let us embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life." This, if any thing, will smoothe our ruffled tempers, relieve our fatigued spirits, and check our petulant humours. This will dissipate the gloom of our solitary years, and support our weary steps in the last stages of our journey.

Let the blessed gospel be our constant theme. The dignity of its Author, the evidence of its arguments, the gentleness of its injunctions, the nature, extent and duration of its promises—these, and innumerable other blessings, make the richest provision for rational consolation, and refined joy.

Religion ! providence ! an after state !
 Here is firm footing ; here is solid rock ;
 This can support us ; all is sea beside ;
 Sinks under us ; bestorms, and then devours.
 His hand the good man fastens in the skies,
 And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.
 Religion ! thou the soul of happiness !
 And greening *Calvary* of thee ! there shine
 The brightest truths ; there ^{thy} strongest motives sting ;
 There sacred violence assaults the soul.

YOUNG.

7. I have already recommended christian cheerfulness as an antidote against that evil which this essay is humbly intended to suppress and correct. A celebrated Author has given us his thoughts on this subject with a justness and propriety peculiar to himself. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of presenting a few of his observations to the reader. Nothing, I apprehend, can be better adapted to my purpose. I shall not therefore crave my reader's pardon for the liberty I am going to take, because I am very much mistaken, if he will not think the following extracts the most valuable part of the *Essay on Anger*.

"I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth. The latter I consider as an act, the former as an habit of the mind. Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent. Those are often raised into the greatest transports of mirth,
 who

who are subject to the greatest depressions of melancholy. On the contrary, cheerfulness, though it does not give the mind such an exquisite gladness, prevents us from falling into the depths of sorrow. Mirth is like a flash of lightning, which breaks through a gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of day-light in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity.

Men of austere principles look upon mirth as too wanton and dissolute for a state of probation, and as filled with a certain triumph and insolence of heart, which is inconsistent with a life every moment obnoxious to the greatest dangers. Writers of this complexion have observed, that the sacred person who was the great pattern of perfection, was never seen to laugh.

Cheerfulness of mind is not liable to any of these exceptions; it is of a serious and composed nature; it does not throw the mind into a condition improper for the present state of humanity; and is very conspicuous in the character of those who are looked upon as the greatest philosophers among the heathens, as well as among those who have been deservedly esteemed as saints and holy men among christians.

If we consider cheerfulness in three lights, with regard to ourselves, to those we converse with,

and to the great Author of our being, it will not a little recommend itself on each of those accounts. The man who is possessed of this excellent frame of mind, is not only easy in his thoughts, but a perfect master of all the powers and faculties of the soul; his imagination is clear, and his judgment undisturbed: his temper is even and unruffled, whether in action or in solitude. He comes with a relish to all those goods which nature has provided for him, tastes all the pleasures of the creation which are poured forth about him, and does not feel the full weight of those accidental evils which may befall him.

If we consider him in relation to the persons with whom he converses, it naturally produces love and good will towards him. A chearful mind is not only disposed to be affable and obliging, but raises the same good humour in those who come within its influence. A man finds himself pleased, he does not know why, with the chearfulness of his companion: it is like a sudden sunshine that awakens a secret delight in the mind without attending to it. The heart rejoices of its own accord, and naturally flows out into friendship and benevolence towards the person who has so kind an effect upon it.

When I consider this chearful state of mind in its third relation, I cannot but look upon it as a
constant

constant habitual gratitude to the great Author of nature. An inward chearfulness is an implicit praise and thanksgiving to Providence, under its dispensations. It is a kind of acquiescence in the estate wherein we are placed, and a secret approbation of the divine will in his conduct towards men.

There are but two things, which, in my opinion, can reasonably deprive us of this chearfulness of heart. The first of these is the sense of guilt. A man who lives in a state of vice and impenitence, can have no title to that evenness and tranquillity of mind, which is the health of the soul. Chearfulness in an ill man deserves a harder name than language can furnish us with, and is many degrees beyond what we commonly call folly and madness.

Atheism, by which I mean a disbelief of the Supreme Being, and consequently of a future state, under whatsoever title it shelters itself, may likewise very reasonably deprive a man of this chearfulness of temper. There is something so particularly gloomy and offensive to human nature in the prospect of non-existence, that I cannot but wonder, with many excellent writers, how it is possible for a man to out-live the expectation of it. For my own part, I think the being of a God so little to be doubted, that it is almost

the only truth we are sure of; and such a truth as we meet with in every object, in every occurrence, and in every thought. If we look into the character of this tribe of infidels, we generally find they are made up of pride, spleen, and cavil: it is indeed no wonder that men, who are uneasy to themselves, should be so to the rest of the world.

The vicious man and atheist have therefore no pretence to cheerfulness, and would act very unreasonably should they endeavour at it.

After having mentioned these two great principles which are destructive of cheerfulness in their own nature, as well as in right reason, I cannot think of any other, that ought to banish this happy temper from a virtuous mind. Pain and sickness, shame and reproach, poverty and old age, nay death itself, considering the shortness of their duration, and the advantage we may reap from them, do not deserve the name of evils. The tossing of a tempest does not discompose him who is sure it will bring him to a joyful harbour.

The consideration of that Being on whom we have our dependence, and in whom we see every thing that we can imagine as great, glorious or amiable, is a source of cheerfulness to a good mind. We find ourselves every where upheld
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by his goodness, and surrounded with an immensity of love and mercy. We depend upon a Being, whose power qualifies him to make us happy by an infinity of means, whose goodness and truth engage him to make those happy who desire it of him, and whose unchangeableness will secure us in this happiness to all eternity.

Such considerations, which every one should perpetually cherish in his thoughts, will banish from us all that secret heaviness of heart, which unthinking men are subject to, when they lie under no real affliction; all that anguish which we may feel from any evil that actually oppresses us; to which I may likewise add, those little cracklings of mirth and folly that are apter to betray virtue than support it; and establish in us such an even and chearful temper, as makes us pleasing to ourselves, to those with whom we converse, and to him whom we are made to please."

May this happy temper be cultivated by us, and this advantage among many others will be sure to follow, we shall not be *soon angry*.

I shall now put a period to this essay, humbly submitting it to the candor of the public. I wish it may in any degree answer the expectations of my friends, who have been so kind as to favour its publication with their encouragement. May the

the God of love and peace seal instruction to all our hearts, and render this feeble effort to promote his glory in the present and everlasting welfare of his creatures, happily conducive to the answering of the desired end! May we, by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and learning of him to be meek and lowly in heart, be formed to a meetness for, and finally by his saving mercy be brought to the possession of, the regions of perfect peace and purity, where friendship, harmony and love flourish and reign through immortal ages! Amen.

F. I. N. I. S.

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